











THE  
HARCOURT PAPERS.

EDITED BY  
EDWARD WILLIAM HARCOURT,  
OF STANTON HARCOURT, AND NUNEHAM COURTENAY,  
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## PREFACE.

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THE seventh volume of these Papers contains selections from the private letters and unpublished papers of Mr. Mason and Mr. Whitehead. Mason himself, in his *Life of Gray*, set a good example in letting the subject of the memoir act as the exponent of his own views. I conceive that no better example can be followed in this instance. A short notice prefixed to the letters of each poet, together with explanatory notes where such notes are necessary, forms the limit within which the Editor proposes to himself to exercise his functions. About one third of the letters from the Nuneham collection are here printed, and even those are much curtailed.

Peculiarities in spelling, in accentuation, in the use of capital letters, &c., have not been interfered with, save where slips of the pen were evident, or where slight alter-

ations had the effect of rendering the sense more clear.

More, perhaps, will be gathered in the way of information regarding the characters of Mason and Whitehead by this mode of presenting them to the reader's notice, than by any more elaborate scheme.

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## CORRIGENDA.

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Page 6, line 15, *for* God *read* word.

„ 25, „ 17, after view, *for* comma substitute colon.

„ 25, „ 18, after Bingley, *for* colon substitute comma.

„ 47, „ 12, *for* I. Pitt *read* T. Pitt.

„ 271, at foot-note add reference letter j.

„ 318, line 1, last word, *for* refer *read* defer.

„ 329, „ 4, *for* æ *read* a.

„ 381, „ 7, *for* painted *read* paint it.

MEMOIR OF MASON.





## Memoir of Mason.

WILLIAM MASON was born at Hull, where his father was a clergyman, in the year 1725. He went to Cambridge in the year 1742, and he there contracted a cordial friendship with Gray.

Gray describes him at the time as

“a young man of much fancy, little judgment, and a good deal of modesty ; a good and well-meaning creature, but in simplicity a child, reading little or nothing, writing abundantly, and with a design of making a fortune by it ; a little vain, but in so harmless and comical a way that it does not offend ; a little ambitious, but withal so ignorant of the world and its ways that it does not hurt him in any one’s opinion ; so sincere and undisguised that no mind with a spark of generosity would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to injury ; but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will signify nothing at all.”

One of his earliest poems, “Isis,” printed in the year 1748, on the supposed Jacobitism

of Oxford, was answered by Warton in "The Triumph of Isis," of which Mason fully acknowledged the merit.

In the year 1752 Mason published "Elfrida," in which he attempted an imitation of the Greek poets, but critics were not favourable to the attempt. It was represented as a tragedy at Covent Garden Theatre; but neither in the year 1772, nor again when it was repeated with alterations in the years 1778 and 1779, was it received with much favour.

In the year 1753 Mason lost his father, and in the year 1754 he took Orders. Lord Holderness was his patron, and obtained for him a Chaplaincy to the King, and the living of Aston.

His next ventures with the publishers were Odes to Memory, to Independency, to Melancholy, and on the Fate of Tyranny. On the death of Cibber the Poet Laureateship was offered to him, but he declined it.

In the year 1759 he was more successful in a dramatic poem called "Caractacus,"

which was also performed at Covent Garden Theatre, and was received with applause. In the year 1762 Mason published three elegies, and in the following year his various writings were collected and issued in a single volume.

About this time Mason was presented by the King to a Canon Residencyship at York; he was made Precentor of that cathedral, and a Prebendary of Driffild.

In the year 1765 he married Miss Sherman, of Hull, but she only lived for two years, and died of consumption at Bristol, whither Mason had taken her for the benefit of her health. In the year 1772 he brought out his book on the "English Garden," of which Warton says,—

"it succeeded in bringing didactic poetry to perfection, by the happy combination of judicious precepts with the most elegant ornaments of language and imagery."

At the same period Mason was employed in publishing the life of Gray. It was given to the world in the year 1775. Gray left

him a legacy of £500, together with all his books, manuscripts, musical instruments, and other things : the life was written with singular fidelity. Mason was a great dabbler in politics, and was fond of patriotic manifestoes, which got him, as King's Chaplain, into some trouble at Court, so much so as to necessitate the resignation of his Chaplaincy. However, the French Revolution thoroughly frightened him, and thenceforth Pitt supplanted Fox in his affection.

In the year 1783 the translation of Du Fresnoy's "Art of Painting" appeared; the annotations made by Sir Joshua Reynolds to Mason's text stamped the book with an additional seal of value. The sister art of Painting had, equally with Poetry, been always wooed by Mason. His slighter sketches were more successful than his more laboured productions in oil. An example of the former is to be found at Nuneham in a sketch of Gray, from which all other pictures of that poet were taken; and his prowess in oils is exemplified by a picture of the good Samari-

tan, intended for an altar-piece for the Nuneham Church, and which certainly is a very moderate performance. One of the gardens at Nuneham still bears Mason's name, although the elaborate drawings of Paul Sandby shew us that time has altered the place so much that the original designs are now hardly to be traced.

In the year 1788 the life of Whitehead was written, and in 1795 an essay on English Church Music appeared. The old barrel-organ in Nuneham Church was set to the music of Mason's hymns. In the year 1796 he collected the whole of his works for publication, but the scheme was not carried into execution till after his death, which occurred April 7, 1797, at the age of 71. An accident brought his life to a close at a time when his bodily health and mental vigour appeared to be unimpaired. Mortification following upon an injury which he sustained by falling from a carriage caused his death. A monument was erected to him in Westminster Abbey. Charitable, firm in friendship, and

conscientious in the discharge of his duties, Mason was not above the smaller attributes of human nature, and his attacks upon Johnson, Akenside, Murray, and others, redounded little to his credit. Mason's poetry was conspicuous for its correctness, but he encumbered it with ornament, which marred the otherwise powerful effects of his descriptions; he is, however, entitled to a very respectable rank amongst the bards of his country. At Nuneham, as long as Nuneham remains what he so much contributed to make it—one of the pleasant places of the earth—Mason's name must always be esteemed a household god. The letters which follow are selected from his correspondence.

## Letters.

MR. MASON TO LORD NUNEHAM.

“To Oxford, fam’d for Ale & Greek,  
Mason is come all fat & sleek,  
Ready to drive in half-an-hour  
To meet his friends at Nuneham bower.  
But, lest the Laureat & the Lord  
Have chosen both to break their word,  
(For Lords & Bards are sort of things  
He trusts no more in than in K—gs),  
Therefore he means to stay, & stare  
at all that Oxford fancys rare,  
And wait an answer to this lay,  
Before he takes a fresh Postchay.

“*Cross Inn, Thursday, 5 o’clock.*”

“*Aston, May 13th, 1757.*”

“MY LORD,—Tho’ I have not had the honor to hear from you I have heard of you, & that *as how* when all the Nobility went to enjoy the delicious conversation of their grooms at Newmarket, your Lordship had bad taste enough to go visit the groom of a certain batter’d stallion called Pegasus, who seldom can keep upon his legs, but when he mounts him. Pray let me know the result of this expedition, and both how you like the University & the Person you went to see; in my mind, if he was in one of his oddest humours, he would suit your Lordship to a hair. But if he only behav’d well to you, you would

not like him at all. Tell me whether I am right in my conjecture.

“And now for a little about myself. I lead the sweetest nothing of a life that you can imagine, and yet I paint & I write & I play. My Paintings I rub out, my writings I burn, & as to my playing that exists only while my fingers are upon the harpsichord. O but then I preach, & have such congregations & am so much admir’d that I am afraid it will make a Coxcomb of me. And of all Coxcombs (as your Lordship knows) an ecclesiastical Coxcomb is the worst. Be that as it may I shall go preaching on to the end of the Chapter. . . .

“My Lord,

“Your most obedient Servant,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, Nov. 10th, 1758.*

“MY LORD,— . . . As to my own Portrait w<sup>ch</sup> you are so obliging to request, I can only say that if Wilson could have made a picture of me capable of enjoying your Lordship’s conversation, I should give it you with more delight than ever I did any thing in my life. The honor you do me in giving me thus a place in your apartment I look upon as having already a place in your esteem & affection. And indeed that would make me more easily submit to what otherwise would



look like vanity in me. Painting was design'd to represent the Gods or great Men that stood next to them, but Friendship I see takes no measure of any thing but by itself, & where it is great & high will make the object so, & raise it above its level. This is that w<sup>ch</sup> has deceiv'd you into my picture and made you put so great a complement upon me, & I do not know what you will find to justify yourself to those who shall see it in your possession ; you may indeed tell them the original is as much yours as the picture, but this will be no great boast, when the man is not more considerable than his shadow.

“Now on supposition that your Lordship has fairly read the foregoing page, I suppose you to cry out, ‘what the Duce is Mason about? I never heard him either talk so or write so.’ Very true ; but, in the last page, be it known to your Lordship, he transcrib'd part of a letter of Mr. Locke's, & this he did for two good purposes, first, because he knew not what to say himself upon the subject, & secondly, because He thought this transcription might prove to you (if you wanted a proof of it) ‘That great Philosophers can, if they please, be as affected & coxcombical as any Poet of us all,’ & if you are not convinc'd he refers you to the rest of the Letter (Vide Locke's Works, Fol., 3rd vol., page 550), as well as to Mr. Molineux's answer, who says very ur-

banelly, 'tis true Painting was design'd to represent the Gods & the great Men who stood next them, & therefore it was that I desir'd your picture.' W<sup>ch</sup>, if he had not said, I think Mr. Locke would have been balk'd.—But after all you'll expect I should say something myself about this matter. I therefore must add that (all speeches about honor you do me—Unworthy—Such a figure, &c., &c., set aside) I cannot think that so unclerical a representation of me is fit to be given you, but if you'll have me Wigg'd, Banded, Cassocked, Gown'd, and to crown all, Scarf'd (for I'm a King's Chaplain you know), I will sit for you, when you please. I saw Whitehead's picture when I was in Town, but it must not go out of Wilson's hands till I see it again, I want several touches about the mouth, &c., & the whole is a tame likeness at present.

"As to 'Caractacus,' he goes on as well as he can, not so well as he should. The 'Faithful Shepherdess' is untranscrib'd, and I have no Curate now to do such things for me.

"Therefore I hope your Lordship will excuse my sending it, & also excuse my long Epistle, w<sup>ch</sup>, considering the smallness of my hand, exceeds yours a great deal, yet I don't bid you swear, as you did me.

"I am, my Lord,

"Your most oblig'd & devoted Serv<sup>t</sup>,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, Jan. 10th, 1759.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . Pray let Miss Rich know that the Clergyman she inquires after was my Curate, whom I thought too well of to suffer to be buried at Aston, & therefore (burying myself in his stead) dismisst into Kent to be tutor to a young gentleman there. If you ask Mr. Whitehead after him, he'll tell you also that he is a Poet—and so he is, & much fitter to wear the Laurel than Whitehead himself. For I like neither of his Odes. The first is my aversion, because after all the noise he makes about Guelpho he takes not a bit of notice of the fair Princess Cunigunda, who, let me tell him, deserv'd all due honor for her namesake, as I could prove out of a book of German Etymologies w<sup>ch</sup> I lately read. As to his last Ode there is but one line in it like an Ode, & that is,

'To British George the King of Isles.'

"You say, my Lord, that you fancy I bury myself in the country out of economy. Not at all I assure you, I could live in London like half the folks in it, that is, by exceeding my income about a third ev'ry year. But that signifys nothing, it is not my reason. I live in the country because my fav'rite philosopher Rousseau tells me 'La Solitude *calme* l'âme,' w<sup>ch</sup> I construe makes it stupid, & of w<sup>ch</sup> I think I find the salutary effects. Nevertheless I sometimes look at 'Caractacus,' &

have given him now his quota of Odes, yet I question whether he will appear this spring; my criticks are so tardy in sending me their criticisms. I will plague your Lordship no longer at present, only please to tell Miss West, with my compliments, that I attempted to answer her note, but could not do it without pulling off my gown and cassock.

“Your Lordship’s devoted Serv<sup>t</sup>,

“W. MASON.”

*Arlington-street, Oct. 30th, 1759.*

“MY LORD,—You do me great injustice in saying that I have given my picture to Dr. Gisborne. The matter of fact is this, Gisborne has lately furnished his house. He told me before I left London last, that he wanted a picture for a particular part of the room, & asked me to lend him mine. I told him if Wilson would consent to it I had no objection, for that I did not intend to take it out of his hands for some time; accordingly he asked Wilson for it, who put him off under pretence of altering the hand. This Wilson says himself was the acc<sup>t</sup> he gave your Lordship, & declares he never told you that I had *given* it away; the truth is, I intend the picture for Mrs. Mason, that she may know what a pretty sort of fellow I was formerly, when I had my *hair tyed up*, & was a *Poet about town*. Was this not the

case I should certainly have done myself the honour to let your Lordship take it at your first request, but really the picture is too cox-combical to be fit for any body, except such a *pretieuse* creature as I intend the said M<sup>rs</sup>. Mason to be.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I can send your Lordship no news, except that Miss Chudleigh going thro' the Anti-chamber yesterday after the Princess, stooped to take up a dirty piece of paper, w<sup>ch</sup> she suspected might be a billet-doux. She was too fat to stoop low enough, & therefore a Physician, more fat than herself, lent his assistance; they could neither of them get their hands lower than their knees, & therefore, after two or three ineffectual efforts, were oblig'd to desist, making one another a bow and a courtesy. The pages laugh'd, the gentlemen ushers smil'd, the officers on guard sneer'd, & only the Chaplain in waiting, with a decency peculiar to himself, kept his countenance. . . .

"I am, your Lordship's

"Most devoted Servant,

"W. MASON."

"July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1760.

"MY LORD,—.... Lord Lyttleton's Book I have seen nothing of, except indeed one Dialogue in the newspapers between Boileau & Pope, w<sup>ch</sup> I

thought a parcel of as pert, priggish, puerile prate as ever Westminster School boy talk'd after he had acted a part in a play of 'Terence,' & been clapt by the wits of the Royal Society, & consequently commenc'd coxcomb for life. But your Lordship says you like the Dialogues, I will therefore read them all, when I can do it under the price of 4 shillings.

"Don't expect me to commend your Lordship for not accepting a commission in the Militia; I assure you, if I was not happily in Orders, I should think it my duty to stop both my ears with wool, then learn to let off a gun, & taking the wool out by little & little, habituate myself so to the sound of that noble instrument of destruction as to stand fire, if not heroically, at least unstartingly. I don't say that your Lordship need go into the wool regimen, but yet—somehow or other—I think you ought to make a part of our national defence if you could; in order to stimulate you to this, I send you the following promissary note:—

"I, William Mason, do promise to write upon the Lord Viscount Newnham's Military atcheivments one Pindaric Ode consisting of three Strophes, three Antistrophes, & three Epodes, so soon as the said Lord Viscount Newnham shall of the French, our natural & implacable enemys, have well & duely slain nine Mounseirs, w<sup>ch</sup> is one less

than any single Englishman is in duty bound to kill for the service of his king & country. Witness my poetic & patriotic hand this eighteenth of July, one thousand seven hundred & sixty.

“W. MASON.”

*“Arlington-street, Nov. 21st, 1760.*

“MY LORD,— . . . Sandby has made such a picture! such a bard! such a headlong flood! such a Snowdon! such giant oaks! such desert caves! If it is not the best picture that has been painted this century in any country I’ll give up all my taste to the bench of Bishops (even to the Bp. who you know read one Ode & not t’other), and ask not even a prebend in exchange. Put on your hat & feather! your red surtout, your Dressden cane, your ribband muff,—put them on, my Lord, & take your chaise du poste, & be pelted all the road for a French Marky, & depend upon it you’ll be amply rewarded by the sight of this picture: then there’s Roche Abbey too! every side & nook of the charmingest ruin in England! In a word, Sandby improves as much in painting as your Lordship does in caprice, or I in laziness, or Miss Chudleigh in fat, or Miss West in, in, in—charms, & in a short time will be that Claude Lorraine, that Browne assured him he was at Lord Scarbro’s in my hearing, & therefore desir’d him ‘not to spoil a Claude by eating too many filberts.’



"I thank your Lordship for recommending to me Watelet's Poem, w<sup>ch</sup> I have at last seen (tho' methinks, considering I was then at Aston, it would have been more charitable in you to have put it under cover for me to Fraser). The dissertations at the end on Beauty & Grace are my particular fav'rites. But what have I to do with Beauty & Grace? I that am but a poor country parson. I forget whether I thank'd you in form for the honor of the Dedicated Etching, I think I did before I rec<sup>d</sup> it, if not, I now want words to do it, for I exhausted all my eloquence last Sunday in a Sermon at Kensington, & have now nothing left but a little sort of Babbiliardize, w<sup>ch</sup> your Lordship's candor is pleas'd to call wit, & your judgment oblig'd to think nonsense. However, what ever it is, it is my own, & that's more than many people can say of their superior talents. . . .

"I rest your Lordship's

"Most oblig'd & devoted Servant,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, January 12th, 1761.*

"MY LORD,— . . . I begin to wonder I have not the honor of a letter from you, your usual condescension in that matter is the cause of this wonder; I have a notion that you are angry because I never communicated to you my Funeral Sermon on Lady Coventry. The reason was that I thought



it too moral for you, for altho' I know your Lordship while abroad was a good & catholic Christian, yet I know not what metamorphosis England & Miss West may have brought about.

"How I long to read *La Nouvelle Eloise*, if it be, as the papers say it is, really Rousseau's! I shall meet it, however, at Doncaster next week, for Fraser is to bring it me in his way to York, where I too mean to accompany Lord Holderness, in order to chuse a proper candidate for Knight of the Shire for this great, good, & opulent county. This journey I shall undertake in the midst of winter out of pure love to old England. May your Lordship copy my patriotism and love your country, tho' you hate every individual in it. Adieu, mi Lor, be as much an English man as ever you can, w<sup>ch</sup> is the only thing you want to be more and better than the generality of men.

"Believe me to be, with very great esteem,

"Your Lordship's oblig'd & obedient Serv<sup>t</sup>,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, September 7th, 1761.*

"MY LORD,—Tho' I hope to see your Lordship in a week's time I dare not approach you without having first answer'd your obliging Letter, yet let me assure you that this fear arises entirely from myself, and least my own heart should reproach

me for a want of due decorum & politesse ; for as to any revenge your Lordship might take upon me for my omission, or any dread of your doing me an ill turn at Court, these considerations have no weight with me in the world. No, my Lord, I fear you in these respects no more than I hope in you ; for tho' an unprefer'd Clergyman like myself, or indeed any Clergyman except the Abp. of Canterbury only, has or ought to have some temporal as well as spiritual hope, yet I own, as to myself, I shall never place mine in your Lordship, & less now than ever.

“ You may if you please call yourself the noted Lord N. ; you may boast of the politeness, the obligingness, the friendliness, the respectfulness, the affectionateness, w<sup>ch</sup> the world shews you ; all that I have to say is that if the world does so, it is a more shortsighted & halfwitted world than I ever thought it before. And yet I never thought highly of it, ever since the time I saw the Devil kick it about like a football, in the frontispiece of Quarles's Emblems, a book I studied much in my infancy, and w<sup>ch</sup> I recommend now to your Lordship, instead of those *Contes Moraux* and *au quelle Contes* that take up so much of your precious time. But the reason this *Etourdie* of a world gives for shewing your Lordship all this distinction diverts me exceedingly : ‘ Because the King has sent your Father to bring over the

Queen.' Let us examine a little how the world reasons on this head. It may be reduc'd into the following syllogisms:—

"Whoever fetches the Queen over must be well at Court.

"Lord H. fetches the Queen over.

"Ergo, Lord H. must be well at Court.

"Lord N. is Lord H.'s son & heir.

"Lord H. is well at Court.

"Ergo, Lord N. must be well at Court.

"Now in this last conclusion lies the fallacy, as I shall fully prove, not by logic but poetry, when I publish my Ode on Filial Affection, w<sup>ch</sup> cannot be finished before my Ode on Heroic Valour. . . .

"Your faithful & devoted Servant,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, Jan. 15th, 1762.*

"MY LORD,—I take for granted Lord Delawarr has informed your Lordship of the multiplication of Dignity lately conferr'd upon me; they come so very suddenly that I have not had time to order Butler to make me a Chariot; I therefore take the liberty to desire your Lordship would order yours to wait for me next Tuesday evening, at the 'Dog & Porridge-pot' in Hockley-in-the-Hole; where, after taking a slight repast on fry'd cow heel, & true Roman Purl, I intend to make my publick entrance into the City

of London. As I pass thro' Covent Garden I intend to stop at the Milliners (I forget her name), where from a fair balcony decorated with Blue Sattin & Blond Lace, or at least Trolly, I expect that Lady Cecilia West should appear with a speech handsomely penn'd *en double entendre*, compos'd by the said Milliner, upon w<sup>ch</sup> I shall let down the right glass of my chariot window & give three short coughs of assent.

"As I pass by the Bedford Coffee House I expect that the wits there with their speaker, Mr. Loydd, will issue forth in a body & tell me that altho' I have borrow'd your Lordship's peacock's feathers, I am nothing more than a mere crow, & versify Esop's fable on the occasion; if this should be the case, I let down the left glass of the chariot window, & with all my lyric fury collected cry out 'Odi profanum Vulgus.' This will be as much as I think I ought to say on the occasion; otherwise I could remonstrate with them, that if I have no right to the tail of your Lordship's peacock, I have a strict right to its throat. For being the precentor, that is to say first singer, of a great Cathedral, what squall except a peacock's can equal mine? Thus I suppose myself fairly out of Covent Garden and its purlieus; I then proceed to Hanover-square, where I purpose to sup with Lord Delawarr on broil'd spratts, with two *hors d'œvers* ('tis all wrong spelt) of oysters

for your Lordship. The next morning the said chariot carries me to St. James's to kiss the King's hand, and here it will serve me in excellent stead, for being gilt, as I am told it is, *en traineau*, it will shew that I have been in Germany, & therefore the most proper of all other Chaplains to escort the King when ever he is forc'd to see his German dominions. The consequence of this is (as it were by divine right) a Bishoprick, the rest of the consequences Lady Cecilia herself will tell you if she's in a good humour.

"Trusting to find your Lordship's chariot and train at the 'Dog & Porridge-pot' aforesaid at the time appointed, I rest,

"My Lord,

"Your Lordship's most oblig'd, most devoted,

"and most obedient Servant,

"W. MASON."

"York, June 9th, 1763.

"MY LORD,— . . . . You cannot imagine how much my spleen is increas'd against the French nation ever since the Peace was concluded. While we were beating them, I kept in tolerable terms of charity towards them ; but now, whether it be out of a desire of being unlike other people, or from some other laudable motive, w<sup>ch</sup> I cannot *entamme*, I hate & detest them ; on this account I desire you to make my *tres respectueux compli-*

*mens* to Mon<sup>r</sup>. Condamine, & tell him he is a fat & a sot, a greater charlatan than Chevalier Taylor, & much more impertinent than even his own impertinent countrymen ever dared to be before; a Suffolk-street bawd attempts to cheat him & therefore the English nation are savages; & he has the effrontarie to tell them so, a rascally son of a bitch! if I was not in Orders I would come to town on purpose to pull him by the nose; pray desire Lord Delawarr to do it for me, if your Lordship is afraid of hurting your own fingers. The fellow comes here to enquire about the longitude I suppose, & yet boasts that the English language is unknown to him. Does he expect Mr. Harrison will talk French to him? I hope the honest mechanic has too much self-reverence to debase his tongue with such frippery prate; let him go home like a fool as he came, & write more lies about the River of the Amazons.

“I have not half unburthen’d myself of my just indignation, however I will stop here, knowing full well I have said enough to inflame your Lordship’s patriotic heart, & to excite you to treat such a coxcomb in the manner he deserves, therefore I expect in return for this that your Lordship will send me *Le nes de Mon<sup>r</sup>. De la Condamine* (for it will come off at the first tweak) in the same sort of pickle that the French Amba-

sadress (I forget her name<sup>a</sup>) pickled her husband in.

"I ought to say something of a certain personage who, by the courtesy of us savages, is called *His Grace*, but I will only thank your Lordship for the friendly part you acted in that matter, & leave him to his own punishment, a rattle brain'd head & a fat concubine. Lord, how horribly English I am in my phraseology!

"Had I writ to your Lordship before the masquerade I should have advised you to have appear'd there in a full bottomed wig & a gilt truncheon, like an old beau that has a mind to seem a hero, I think it would have become you mightily. Dear Lady Mary! Who would not have risked his constitution, as far as a *G—a simplex*, to have been acquainted with her? Pope you know went further, for all the world reads that line literally,—

'P—d by her love & libell'd by her hate.'

"I will follow your Lordship's example & not subscribe my name to this Letter; indeed I think it would be most prudent to burn this and not write another, as you keep all my letters, and for my soul I cannot write prudently when I write to your Lordship; I beg, however, of Posterity when they read it to treat it with as much candor as they can; w<sup>ch</sup> they cannot do unless they are as much mine as I am your Lordship's

"Sincerely devoted Friend."

<sup>a</sup> "I recollect it, Madame de Cambise."



"Aston, December 1st, 1763.

"MY LORD,—Your Lordship's letter, dated Wimbledon Park, June 16th, concluding with these remarkable words, 'for a *good* woman as a companion is a bad thing,' lies before me unanswer'd, & I am in great doubt whether I should not burn it unanswer'd. 'Tis true when I received it the sentence did not strike me with any great abhorrence; but now I am of opinion that nothing in Wilkes's Essay on Woman can be more diabolical. Ask me not what has occasioned this change of sentiment. 'Procul esto profane!' (you know Latin enough to construe the exclamation), as I said before, to Lord Delawarr, you never shall see her while you've a nose on your face, or a solitaire round your neck. No, my Lord, go to your *dames de qualité*, with their bouderies, their agaceries, their coquetteries, their bitcheries, and when you've amus'd yourself with them *de votre façon*, turn them over to Stonehewer for the grosser part of the affair; but hope not ever to behold the fair, the chaste, the inexpressive she. I will, however, suffer Ariosto<sup>b</sup> to give you a little part of her description:—

'Bianca neve è il bel collo, et e'l petto latte;  
Il collo è tondo, il petto colino e largo:  
Due pome acerbe, e pur d'avorio fatte,  
Vengono e van come onda al primo margo,  
Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.'

<sup>b</sup> Canto vii. Stanz. xiv., Orlando Furioso.



“Except the single epithet *largo*, this hits her to a hair. *Mais parlons d'autres choses*. The time now approaches w<sup>ch</sup> your Lordship fixed for honouring me with a visit at Aston. I don't doubt but you hold your resolution, the weather, the roads, everything conspires to make you keep it. My Parsonage also, w<sup>ch</sup> I have just began to inhabit, will afford you all the agreeable incommodities *pour tuer ennui* that you can imagine. A hard Windsor chair will be your only footwheel, and black leg'd chickens on pewter dishes your choisest *Grand chere*; excellent ale into the bargain, & not bad port, tho' a little thickened by removing. Come, therefore, if you dare!

“Had you come lately to York, when I gave a public breakfast to Lady Bingley, you would have seen me in a different point of view, apropos to Lady Bingley: she ‘adores Lord Newnham, so unlike the young men of quality one sees now-a-days, has quite a passion for operas; etches charmingly; has made her a present of all his charming etchings, w<sup>ch</sup> she has fram'd & hung up in Bramham Hall.’ This puts me in mind that I must have two compleat sets, one for Aston & another for York, therefore pray bring them with you, or let me have them when I come to town.

“My book was to have come out before Xtmass, but my bookseller has beg'd to postpone the pub-

lication till Mr. Wilkes ceases to ingross the public attention, to w<sup>ch</sup> request I have willingly condescended, not desiring to divert the public attention from so agreeable an object. However, your Lordship may have a book when you please after the 10th, by sending the inclosed note for it; but you must positively not let it go out of your own hands, and, as I make no presents except to a few Authors who I pay in kind, you must not say I gave it you.

“Adieu, *mon chere Milord*. Go to your House of Commons. I shall take up Ariosto, & when he has tir’d me, sigh a little after *mia bella Donzella*; drink her health in a sneaker of Rum punch, go to bed & dream of her. *Ah Cara! Cara!*

“Your Lordship’s most devoted,

“W. M.”

“*Reasons pour & contre relative to Lord Viscount Nuneham’s intended expedition to France.*

“*Pour.*

He ought to go because he of all Englishmen in the world will be the least likely to be spoil’d by such an expedition, his Lordship being sufficiently spoil’d already.

“*Contre.*

It will throw the whole French nation into the nerves to see an Englishman more Frenchified than themselves, a thing not to be wished while we are in a state of peace.

2<sup>nd</sup>.

He will save a great deal of money by this Tour, Pomade à la Duchesse & Eau Misterieux being 5 p<sup>r</sup> cent. cheaper at Paris than in this Island.

3<sup>rd</sup>.

His health will be greatly improv'd, as in France only he can find *de quoi manger*.

4<sup>th</sup>.

He will have an opportunity of procuring a model for a new carriage the next winter, and may bring over a pot of Martin's best varnish to put upon it.

5<sup>th</sup>.

He will perhaps find some authentic records in the Maison d'Harcourt, by w<sup>ch</sup> he will be enabled to carry the antiquity of his family anteriour to the reign of Clovis.

6<sup>th</sup>.

He will find the French ladies *ravissantes*, as they neither comb their hair nor wash their chemises.

2<sup>nd</sup>.

He will disoblige his father, his mother, and aunt who reads the revelations.

3<sup>rd</sup>.

He will grow fat and have a pot belly.

4<sup>th</sup>.

Next winter he won't have a single Guinea left to buy one withal. This objection answer'd by his being a Lord & the feasibility of post obits.

5<sup>th</sup>.

He will perhaps have the misfortune to find certain Friseurs & Marchands de Linge bearing the same name & arms.

6<sup>th</sup>.

The French ladies won't like him, as he cannot talk metaphysics, & is but about half a Deist.

7<sup>th</sup>.

The men of fashion will think him polite, because he will call all their Tabatieres *charmantes*.

7<sup>th</sup>.

He will be disgusted with their conversation, because he will find them more ignorant than he can pretend to be.

8<sup>th</sup>.

The *Gens de Lettres* will be much to his *gout*, as they are also *Gens de Société*.

8<sup>th</sup>.

These said *Gens* won't hold him in sufficient reverence when they find he has quarrell'd with Madame Mallock.

9<sup>th</sup>.

He will frequently attend High Mass at Notre Dame, and admire the politesse of ev'rybody's genuflexion at the Elevation.

9<sup>th</sup>.

He will run the risk of becoming for the second time a good Catholic.

10<sup>th</sup>.

He is sufficiently read in the works of Crebillion to be very adroit in the first openings, or (as I may call it) induction of an amour.

10<sup>th</sup>.

He is not, I fear, enough of a Jean Chaudois to execute the conclusion *à la dernière perfection*.

11<sup>th</sup>.

He will be delighted both with the dance and spectacle of the opera.

11<sup>th</sup>.

But he will be shocked with their singing and frightened with their *feu d'artifice*.

12<sup>th</sup>.

When presented at Court he will adore the strut of the French King, and think that nothing but an absolute Monarch can be graceful.

12<sup>th</sup>.

The said King will turn his *cul* upon him, having already read in Mon<sup>r</sup>. de Gueray's Dispatches (I mean Madame's, for Mon<sup>r</sup>. can't write) that his Lordship voted *contre son roi*.

13<sup>th</sup>.

To conclude: he will come home full of ennui, and in his heart fonder of his native country than he was when he went out.

13<sup>th</sup>.

But his vanity will put him under the continual mortification of keeping this a profound secret, and he will affect to despise Old England more than ever."

" York, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1764.

"MY LORD,—By what I have written your Lordship will find how much I interest myself in every step w<sup>ch</sup> your Lordship either takes or is about to take; in the present case I pretend not to advise any thing, I only have drawn up for your consideration such arguments for & against your Tour as seem'd to my poor judgment most momentous. Weigh them, therefore, I beseech your Lordship, very maturely in the scale of your best discretion, and take your part accordingly; I will only say that in acquitting myself of this act of friendship, I have taken all due pains to

divest myself of prejudice & partiality, and have selected, with the greatest care & candor, such reasons as seem'd to me most important, omitting a thousand others w<sup>ch</sup> I thought too obvious or too trivial.

"I hope the labour I have taken will immediately entitle me to all your new etchings. By the way, I cannot help animadverting upon your reason for not sending them before, because I should apprehend that if you could convey me a letter by the York post, you might also convey me a parcel by the York carrier. Please, therefore, to roll them up in a double thick paper, & direct them by the said carrier to me at the Deanery, York. If your Lordship really goes to France, I shall expect also at your return a biddet of Vencenne China in a Japann'd frame *brodée à la Grèc*, so ㄅㄅㄅ, as a present for the future —

"No room for my name."

## ODE.

“O THOU who know'st, with science rare,  
 To elevate patrician hair,  
     And build the Greek *toupee*<sup>c</sup>,  
 Louis ! forgive that impious brute  
 Who dar'd of dress (Mon Dieu !) pollute  
     The GREATER MYSTERY<sup>d</sup>.

“'Tis said, Monsieur, when first you saw  
 That group my pencil dar'd to draw,  
     You made the critique true.  
 ‘I thinks the awkward squinting elf  
 ‘Might full as well have draw'd himself,  
     ‘As Me, my Lord, or You.’

“I might, indeed, I own I might ;  
 And should have done so with delight,  
     But Modesty deny'd.—  
 ‘Your Modesty—Diable ! Peste !  
 ‘Poet & Painter you professt,  
     ‘And Parson too beside !

<sup>c</sup> A Latinism, *condere Carmen*. So Milton, to BUILD the lofty Rhyme.

<sup>d</sup> The mysteries of the toilette, like the Elusinian, may with great propriety be divided into Greater & Lesser. The Lesser include the mystery of buckling the shoe, tying the garter, &c. These may be, & frequently are, celebrated by a common servant in livery, but all above these, particularly the *accomodage*, the greatest of them all, & w<sup>ch</sup> is here by a poetical periphrasis term'd the elevation of patrician hair, is of the Greater kind ; there the *valet de chambre* is the proper & only Mystagogue.

“ ‘ These trades my Lord & I know well  
 ‘ Are all as impudent as hell <sup>e</sup> ,  
 ‘ And so says Francis Horace ;  
 ‘ Francis has prov’d it to a hair—  
 ‘ Come, Monsieur Maçon, pray prepare  
 ‘ A better reason for us.’

“ A better reason—take it then—  
 Had I attempted with this pen  
 To draw myself—d’ye see—  
 Each creature breathing had mistook  
 My squinting leer, & roguish look,  
 For Wilks and Liberty.”

“ *Queen-street, March 30th, 1768.*

“ MY LORD,—I have the chagrin to find that  
 tho’ your Lordship accepted my drawing<sup>f</sup> with  
 your usual candour, it has had the misfortune to  
 displease Mon<sup>r</sup>. Louis, I have therefore endea-  
 vour’d to apologize for my fault in the inclosed  
 Ode, w<sup>ch</sup> I beg your Lordship will be so kind to  
 present to him at some happy moment when he

<sup>e</sup>. *Pictoribus atque Poetis quid libet audendi.* So sings Horatius  
 Flaccus, but the author here quoted added *Parsonibus*, not perhaps  
 in words but always in deeds.

<sup>f</sup> The drawing was an excellent caricature of Lord Nuneham at  
 his toilette, with two French hairdressers cutting his hair, & his  
*valet de chambre*, Louis (a Swiss), standing behind, with Bottarelli  
 the Opera poet, to whom he is reading, on a chair on one side.  
 Louis having taken offence at his portrait said, “he might as well  
 have draw’d himself squinting” (meaning squinting). The hair  
 was then dressed high, & called a *toupet à la Grèc*.



has arranged your *Coiffure au mieux*. I flatter myself that your Lordship's eloquence added to these verses may in time appease his resentment; in the meantime I remain (*très mortifié*),

"Your Lordship's

"Most obsequious Servant,

"W. MASON."

"Aston, September 26, 1772.

"MY LORD,—I return you the plan of your Flower Garden with another trac'd from it, in w<sup>ch</sup> I have drawn a gravel walk round it, & alter'd the form of the beds, & also (with a horrible green wash) notified what ought to be grass. It looks so ugly on paper that I doubt not you will throw it into the fire. You may do so with all my heart, only before you do, take one hint from it, w<sup>ch</sup> indeed is all it is meant to give, viz<sup>t</sup>. that there should be due space of grass for walking on (not less, for instance, than the breadth of six feet) between *every* part of *every* clump or bed. As to the shape of these beds you may vary them as you please, in such a way as to have the best effect from the principal buildings. Your eye on the spot must direct that; my plan only means to shew you in what manner, not the precise thing, for I dare say, if I was to superintend the work myself, I should adhere closely to the plan in nothing but the circuit of walk. You will please to observe that the

black dots • denote detached flowering shrubs, such as Arbuti, small Magnolias, &c., and perhaps if your Lordship was to sink an orange tub here & there, or Myrtle, covering it with turf, it might do well in those places ; I think I saw this done at Lady Dashwood's, w<sup>ch</sup> had a good effect. I have nothing more to add on this subject, except that if you follow my plan exactly, as you say you will, you will certainly do wrong. You must consider it merely as a hint, & nothing more ; as such, perhaps it may have some little utility, if you can overlook the awkward coloring. I blush to think how Walter Clerk will despise it, & yet it does not look quite so like a blistering plaister as the original, 'tis more of the mellilot hue, to be laid on after the other, as it should in the order of cure.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I shall hope to hear from your Lordship as the great work proceeds ; Mr. Whitehead says, if you turn it into grass it will be all poachy ; this I cannot conceive, considering how the ground falls, & the capability of drains. My best respects attend Lady Nuneham and Miss Fauquier : believe me to be,

“My Lord,

“With great sincerity y<sup>rs</sup>,

“W. MASON.”

"Aston, Nov. 1st, 1772.

"MY LORD,—I have only just now rec<sup>d</sup> your Lordship's letter, but hope this will reach you soon enough to inform you that you must not go by Sheffield, not only because it is 7 miles further, but I verily believe a worse road. Your way will be from Chesterfield thro' Stowely (pronounce, Staley) & Balbro on the Worsop road. Very soon after you are thro' Balbro you take the turnpike from Mansfield to Rotherham, on the left, w<sup>ch</sup> brings you to Aston.

"I will say nothing about the ennui you talk of, I know, however, if there be any extant while you are at Aston it must be of your own importation, for I am well convinc'd you always carry a *petit Batterie de Cuisine* to cook it in on your rural expeditions, & make it as conveniently for your own use as you do your coffee. Be this as it may, should ever the ennui be on my side I shall not let you stir on the third day, because, if you come as you propose, that third day will be Sunday; and my parishioners have been so frequently shock'd with seeing a great Lord & Governor<sup>s</sup> travel on that day, that if I suffer your Lordship to do the same, they will conclude the whole Peerage of England to be a collection of *Esprit forts*, or, in their language, Sabbath-breakers,

& ripe for the gallows, to w<sup>ch</sup> that none of them may ever arrive is the hearty prayer of your Lordship's most faithful Servant,

“W. MASON.

“My best respects attend Lady Nuneham; you may assure yourself, my Lord, that no Nabob or country parson shall disturb your quiet here.”

“Aston, November 6th, 1772.

“MY LORD,—I presume you have rec<sup>d</sup> e'er this *mon Chart du Jardin à la mellilot*, w<sup>ch</sup> I take for granted pleases you *au merveille*. In reward for this service I must beg you to grant me one favour, viz<sup>t</sup>. a recommendatory letter or two to France for my friend M<sup>r</sup>. Foljambe, who is now on his way thither from Vienna. You know I cannot ask this favour of Lord Holderness, therefore I write to your Lordship & M<sup>r</sup>. Walpole; all that the young man wants is a recommendation to any body that will introduce him to a few fandangos. He is no philosophe, but a good genteel figure, w<sup>ch</sup> will not discredit your recommendation, even if you recommend him to any *Femme de condition*. He was almost as well *coiffé* as your Lordship when he went out of England, & I trust he has not liv'd three months at Vienna for nothing. As to his *Parlez vous*, I question whether 'tis much better than mine. But then his family is very antient,

and his arms are,  
FOUL LEG, wound-  
in the Holy Wars.  
tempt you either  
or get him recom-  
not what will. I



word more to add, w<sup>ch</sup> is, that if you accord me  
this favour you will please to invellope what you  
send as soon as may be à Mon<sup>r</sup>. Mon<sup>r</sup>. Foljambe,  
*chez* Mess<sup>rs</sup>. Tourton & Baner, Banquiers, Place  
des Victoires, Paris. . . .

as you see, a very  
ed, I will warrant,  
If this will not  
to recommend him  
mended, I know  
have only one

“Believe me to be at all times, my good Lord,

“Yours most cordially,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, December 2nd, 1772.*”

“MY LORD,—‘Fidget’ and I are hardly yet  
recover’d from the chagrin of our disappointment.  
Lady Frippery was never more anxious about the  
coming of Lady Bab Frightful than we were for  
a whole week on acct. of your Lordship. ‘Molly’  
(says I to a pretty tight kind of a chambermaid  
that I have), ‘I forbid you to wash any of the  
rooms.’ ‘Lord, S<sup>r</sup>,’ says she, ‘they are so dirty.’  
‘No matter, no matter, they are the more French  
for that.’ A brother parson sends me a present  
of grapes from his hot house: ‘Hang them up,  
Benjamin,’ says I, ‘in the pantry for our desert  
when his Lordship comes.’ ‘The rabbits that are

there already hanging up for an Ho—go will make them stink.’ ‘So much the better, ’twill give them an heterogeneous flavor, & his Lordship likes every thing that has a *soupçon* of heterogenosity.’ In short, there is no end of telling the consultations, the preparations, the expectations, that all came to nothing on this occasion.

“I know no amends that you can make me, unless your Lordship promises to correspond with me frequently during this long winter, and keeps your promise with punctuality, for I feel already that I shall hardly be able to weather it without all kinds of possible amusement, if the wind blows and my house smokes as horribly as it has done for these last three weeks.

“And so you see little Mr. Colman and old fumbling Dr. Arne have committed a rape on the body of my poor daughter Friddy<sup>h</sup>. Don’t you pity her & me exceedingly. Lord bless us! they say she is in very high keeping, & has eight *femmes de chambre* to attend her, & fourteen more to sing her asleep. And what is more extraordinary than all is that all these 2 & 20 females are pure & immaculate virgins who never stir’d out of the purlieus of Covent Garden.

“Now till this moment I must confess I had such a prejudice against *femmes de chambre* in general, that I never thought any of them were

<sup>h</sup> “Elfrida,” a play written by Mason.

better than they should be except Mr. Bradshaw's sister, who attends Lady Holdernessee, & a certain Lady whom I had once the honour to travel with in a stage coach, & who formerly attended Lady Nuneham. But I find I have been in a gross error, & therefore, if ever I become reconcil'd to my reprobate daughter, I mean to borrow one of the handsomest of her *suivantes* to keep me warm these winter nights. Yet I keep this intention of mine secret from my own family at present, for fear Molly should be jealous, & Molly, let me tell you, has a pair of as good black eyes as the best of them.

"They say Garrick has been in a great fidget about this representation of Elfrida, & says, had he thought it would have been agreeable to Mr. Mason he would have brought it on upon his stage, &c. Now this I know will have such an effect on your Lordship that you will go incontinently to Covent Garden, with handkerchief & orange by your side, and say that Mrs. Hartley is the best tragic actress that ever appeared since Mrs. Pritchard; that the very soul of harmony breaths in all Dr. Arne's compositions; and that since the days of the Min-gotti, no body could sing a note like Miss Catley.

"I shall direct this to Leicester House, tho' I suppose the meeting of the Parliament has hardly brought you up to Town, yet I take for granted it will be sent forward to you.



"Pray is it not possible that the Mons<sup>r</sup>. Sidni mentioned in those letters might be the other (who I think was Alg<sup>s</sup>. brother), a Courtier, & consequently a rogue. If this could be prov'd, O how I should rejoice! but not before Sr. John D. had published his trash. Now really & sincerely, if your Lordship will correspond with me during this winter, I will be the most punctual & fantastical of all correspondents. I beg my best respects to Lady Nuneham, profoundest compliments to Miss Fauquier, all sorts of civilitys to Mr. Jerningham, & (in spite of my cursed Ennui) a friendliness of old date to Mr. Whitehead. I take for granted the Earl & Countess of Jersey have left Nuneham, else I would invent a proper phrase for them, & would also add a period to the 4<sup>th</sup> page of my letter, in w<sup>ch</sup> I would say something decent touching my opinion of Memoiselle Manon's virginity.

"Your Lordship's most faithful, &c.,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, January 14th, 1773.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . You ask me for one of the most difficult things in the world, when you ask me for the design of a garden seat. All sorts of trelliages are in my mind abominable, & nothing else is tolerably cheap. If one could get



ivy or woodbine to creep as fast & in the same manner that one would have them, the matter would soon be managed by any front of rough stone, but as years upon years must come over our heads before they produce their effect, I have too much respect for your Lordship's patience to make the attempt. Why not then buy some little plain canvass thing at Knightsbridge, & paint it green, or rather olive, & let it speak for itself, 'I am only useful, & was never meant to be handsome, but pray don't think me hideous?' or if you rather chuse it to speak verse, it may speak thus:—

“ ‘Beneath my canvass roof reclin'd  
You'll sit secure from sun & wind,  
But if to yon south-west ye turn ye,  
Quiet will roast, & Flora burn ye<sup>1</sup>.  
Tho' I'm not half so fine as either  
I'm better shelter in hot weather.’

“What would you have? If this is not almost as simple an inscription as I lately writ at the request of the Premier for General Wolfe, and w<sup>ch</sup> had not the good fortune (as I fancy) to please greater folks than he, I do not know what an inscription should be; now you must know when I was requested as above I return'd for answer, that if I was not convinc'd in my own mind that a very short, plain, classical inscription, either

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to a seat dedicated to “Quiet” and to a statue of Flora.

in English or Latin *prose*, would have much more dignity in it than any *verse*, I should willingly make an attempt. This opinion of mine was approv'd, & I was by a second letter from Cooper desir'd to write one; I did so; *le voila*:—

“‘To the Memory of  
     &c.,  
 Conqueror of Canada,  
 Who died in the hour of Victory  
     date . . .  
 The King, Parliament & People  
     of Great Britain  
 dedicate this monument.’

Well! it was allow'd to have great dignity in it, but as Wolfe only conquer'd the Capitol of Canada, Sr. Jeffry Amherst might be angry, and now I believe the vote of the House is to be on the Monument at full length, & afterwards something in what they call elevated *prose*. Pray tell Mr. Walpole this anecdote; I have just written to him & had not room to mention it. After all, Whitehead's last new year's Ode has much more merit with me than even my own inscription, for this plain reason, because there is not one word of King in it.

“Believe me, my Lord,

“Very sincerely yours,

“W. MASON.

“My best respects to Lady Nuneham.”

## "BULLE.

*"To our dearly beloved Simon, Cardinal, of Nuneham, our chosen Legate for the purposes hereafter mentioned, taste, & critical acumen.*

"Whereas our well-beloved son, Edward de Jer-ningham, of the order of Poets *en solitaire*, has sent unto us a certain Poem called Faldoni and Teresa, humbly acknowledging our poetical supremacy & infallibility, & also praying our plenary indulgence for the same; & whereas, according to the irrefragable taste given unto us, we have, at our learned leisure, perused the said Poem, and have found, or candidly thought we have found, certain touches of Nature & strokes of Pathos in it. We do, therefore, by this our Poetical Bull, grant not only to the said son Edward, but to ev'ry well dresst Gentleman, whose good fortune it shall be to find any fine Lady shedding tears over the said poem, our full & free permission to kiss the said Lady, and we absolve him from all duty of confessing to his confessor in that he has done so; and her, on her part, of confessing to her confessor that she has been so done to; provided always that the kiss so given and received be only the *osculum charitatis*, or kiss of charity, & that the two parties proceed no further.

"And whereas we also find in the said Poem certain rhymes, heretofore believed to be false &

heretical, such as *resolve, dissolve; form, perform; repair, despair*, &c., for w<sup>ch</sup> we suppose our indulgence is more immediately pray'd for, we do by this our Bull grant unto our son Thomas our plenary indulgence for these, & all other sins of the like nature; and, by the power in us invested of transubstantiating bad rhymes into good, & good rhymes into bad, we do here solemnly pronounce the said rhymes to be orthodox, genuine, & *della crusca*, and we damn, & by this our poetical fulmination do damn to the deepest pit of Grub-street infamy, all writers of Reviews & Magazines, whether critical or monthly, town or country, Covent Garden, Westminster, & Macaroni, &c., &c., if they or any of them do presume to call the said rhymes in question. And this our poetical curse we extend to all printers, publishers, & readers of them, to them & their heirs for ever.

“And if any of our tuneful predecessors, sitting as we now do in the chair of Shakespeare, shall have declared any doctrine contrary to this, our will is that Samuel Johnson, or some able critic, do explain the same to be consonant to this our orthodox doctrine, & if this cannot be done, then we declare theirs to be null & void, as their infallibility (w<sup>ch</sup> we acknowledge) could only extend to the time being. And whereas our said son has humbly requested our tuneful portrait, sitting in our said chair, & looking as if it was thinking,

our will is that Prior Stonehewer do deliver unto him a copy of the same; and our further will is that you our Cousin & Cardinal, Simon de Nuneham, do tye with your own hands a knot of rose-color'd ribband over the said portrait, and that the Lady Abbess of Nuneham do present unto the said Edward of the order of Poets *en solitaire*, a Bouquet of her choicest Hyacinths (they not having been worn above 6 times at her Almack's or Opera vespers, & while they continue still fresh & blooming), & this said Bouquet we command him to place underneath our said portrait, in a vase of *Porcelaine du Roy*, in token of that odor of sanctity & sweet savour in w<sup>ch</sup> we hold him and his poetry.

"Given at our Vatican near the Church of St. Mary & All Saints, in Aston, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February, & 4<sup>th</sup> of our Pontificate.

"Settle the xv<sup>th</sup>,

"Scribbler of Scribblers.

"*Undersigned,*

"FIDGET."

"*Aston, February 10th, 1773.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . I have had another letter from Cooper about the Epitaph, & have answered him by saying, 'that he and Lord North apply to a wrong shop for elevated prose, they must go

to St. John Dalrymples ;' & thither I trust they will go.

"I had seen both Mr. Gray's Song & Beattie's Hermit before you was so obliging as send them, but did not know the occasion of the former's being written. As to the latter, I like it extreamly, but yet I think it *manqué*, something ought to be added concerning the immortality of the soul ; and this, trust me, I do not say *en prêtre*, but *en honnette Homme*. As it is, David Hume might have writ it, if he could ; but it is by no means worthy the Vanquisher of David, I mean only in point of sentiment, for as to all the rest it is pathetic & excellent.

\* \* \* \* \*

"My dear Lord, I beg you to keep up your spirits, and if you can't laugh at the world when you are out of it, go into it again by all means ; I assure you I mean to do so if my risible faculties leave me for living out of it, but this at present I do not feel, tho' I can at times be as *cursedly ennuie* (as the Laureat says) as your Lordship yourself, but in spirits & out of them I am always yours,

"W. MASON."

"Aston, March 21st, 1773.

"MY LORD,—The post after I answer'd your last, I receiv'd another curious poetical treat from

you. You are exceeding kind to send me these sort of *bon-bons* to sweeten the bitterness of my village solitude. I cannot help owning (tho' my loyalty crimsons my cheek while I own it) that I did frequently smile when I read that wicked Poem ; I hear M<sup>rs</sup>. Ann Pitt calls it abominably clever, & I adopt her expression ; I am told too that Charles Fox says it is written by the Author of the 'Bath Guide,' and I adopt his opinion. However, it is certainly better written than his Epistle to Buckhorse. The same intelligence adds that Mr. I. Pitt lays the brat at my door, but says I got it after I had taken a cup too much. Your Lordship knows me too well to suspect either my loyalty or sobriety, & therefore I think I need say nothing to prove my innocence on this head, or to induce you to clear me of so dreadful an imputation. But your Lordship says you like it exceedingly ; if you do, I suppose it is chiefly because you think such taste, such times, and such politics as ours deserve rather to be laugh'd at than seriously satirized, and in this I agree with you ; we want a Rabelais rather than a Boileau. . . .

“Your Lordship's

“Most cordially,

“W. MASON.”



*"Melton, October 6th, 1777.*

"MY LORD,—I deferr'd answering your Lordship's most obliging letter till I could speak with some certainty about the time when I could wait upon you at Nuneham; I was oblig'd to come here to the Dean of York's first, & on the 8th I must meet a person on business at home. Lord John Cavendish has presst me much to call upon him at his new purchase near Northampton, & Mr. Frederick Montagu and I are to set out from Papplewick for that place either on the 10th or 11th; our stay there will not be above two or three days, & then I mean to make the best of my way to Nuneham.

"But here starts up a difficulty: my maps tell me that Middleton is in the direct road from Northampton to Oxford; & a letter of Lady Jersey's from Chatsworth has told me that all the race of Clarendon are to be at Middleton, & my own heart & inclinations tell me that I would much rather read all Lord Clarendon's History of the Grand Rebellion, with the continuation, supplement, & state papers that vouch for the authenticity of the said History, than meet the living representatives of Clarendon at Middleton; therefore, what is to be done? Your Lordship must tell me in a letter directed to Lord John, at Billing, near Northampton, and point out a safe & convenient passage for me to Oxford, either by the



way of Exeter, Monmouth, & so up the Wye, or any other road you think most expeditious, or you must tell me that the Clarendons have 'granged' themselves at home again, & then I'll venture to Middleton.

"What more remains of your Lordship's most kind letter to answer cannot be answer'd with a bad pen in a cold room without a fire; for my very reverend host because it was very hot last week thinks it is very hot still, tho' there's a westerly wind fit to blow one over; but no matter, 'tis a fine day, for the sun shines. . . .

"Your most truly affectionate

"& oblig'd Servant,

"W. MASON."

*"York, March 21st, 1778.*

"MY LORD,—Mr. Car has so much employment abroad that he is seldom at York. I have, however, had a conference with him, & the result is a plan w<sup>ch</sup>, with its accompaniments & two variations of the hall, will come to your Lordship by the York Coach about the time with this letter. Before I enter on an explication of the design, I must apologize for the want of a chappel in it, w<sup>ch</sup> Mr. Car thinks inadmissable. However, when we build Courtenay Castle upon the hill<sup>k</sup>, as it

<sup>k</sup> This is the spot where Carfax now stands, which took the place of the projected castle as an object from the house.

will be further from the house than the present church is, it will be surely the most eligible place for your domestic chappel, and there, too, we can exert our Gothic phantazys with more propriety than in the neighbourhood of Steward's Grecisms.

"The elevation on white paper shews the junction of the wings to the house as well as the new Loggio. This Loggio is suppos'd to be open from the top of the basement to the top of the columns, in some sort like including the present stone steps under a portico, but giving more space to the hall as appears by the plan entituled General; but in this your Lordship must make this distinction, that this plan delineates the base story with respect to the wings and the principal story in the body of the house.

"The kitchen, w<sup>ch</sup> is meant to rise two storys, ought to have been plac'd on the other side, in order to connect it with the intended *bas cour*. Car, not knowing the situation, thought it would be more convenient to the dining-room as it is plac'd on the plan, but let the two wings change sides, and then the kitchen will occupy the space of the present library & the rooms under it. The dinner will be carried cross the Loggio to the little staircase adjoining the dining-room, w<sup>ch</sup>, considering that your *Gens* have most of them long legs, is no great matter. Car engages that the doors w<sup>ch</sup> he shall make in the passage

will take off the smell, on w<sup>ch</sup> side soever the kitchen be plac'd. But this I fear you will not believe, nor indeed do I entirely; yet I am sure it will be a less nuisance than it is at present.

"Plan B unshaded, w<sup>ch</sup> ought to have been A, shews the base part of the staircase; d<sup>o</sup> shaded, the entrance from the Loggio. Plan A varies the idea of the Loggio, by shutting it up & making both staircase & hall on the inside of the house. This will not alter the appearance of the front, but as I think will rather improve it, for as the four Ionic columns are meant to be whole ones, and just only isolated from the wall, the portico front will have an effect similar to that charming front of Lord Strafford's, w<sup>ch</sup> I think derives its principal beauty from that single circumstance, having all the grace of a portico without its darkning the inside.

"The *Appliqué* is somewhat similar to Lord Leicester's staircase, & will admit of various ornaments; but Mr. Car thinks the space too small for an idea of this sort, therefore I fear we shall have no nitch for Jupiter, and if we had it would stop the way to the present housekeeper's octagon room<sup>1</sup>. Car has drawn a line in the principal plan thro' the dark closet near the staircase into the present octagon saloon, in w<sup>ch</sup> place he thinks a jibb<sup>m</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The present billiard-room.

<sup>m</sup> This jibb-door was made 55 years afterwards by Archbishop Harcourt.

door would be useful for the servants to come thro' instead of passing thro' the drawing-room or intended library; in this case the Madona would hang on that jibb door.

"Thus, my Lord, I have explain'd *de mon mieux* the aforesaid plans. Car thinks the expence of this alteration in either way will be moderate, as the present work'd stone will be us'd again & brought forward to the new wall, so that little new stone will be wanting, save for the columns.

"I heartily congratulate you on your brother's return, I trust he will let a certain person take the next Percy himself: this allusion is not my own, I learn'd it of the Chamberlain of her Majesties household. . . .

"Your Lordship's

"Most faithfully devoted,

"W. MASON.

"The enlarg'd elevation is only added to give a clearer idea of the proportions of the columns, &c.

"Mr. Car means to be in Town about May, when he will wait on your Lordship, if he finds our present labors come up in any sort to your ideas, but I shall hear from you first<sup>n</sup>.

"For my own part I cast my prophetic glance not far into futurity, & there read that we are en-

<sup>n</sup> Car's plans were excellent, but not carried out on account of their costliness.

deavoring to improve a mansion for the Marquess de La Fayette, who will have Blenheim for his *palazzo*, and Nuneham for one of his *maisons* or *chateau de chasse*."

" York, April 20th, 1778.

"MON CHER MI LOR,—I ought to have told your Lordship a fortnight ago that I had seen Mr. Car, & read to him so much of your Lordship's letters as was necessary, and that he has no doubt (when he has talk'd with you, & seen the house) he can contrive all matters to your mind, & at a moderate expence. He himself intimated the feasibility of changing the present library into a bed-chamber, as you mention in your last, just rec<sup>d</sup>. He has no idea whatever of touching the great room or any of the apartments that now stand, & even would wish to keep the present dining-room for a dining-room still. He says also that the present stone in front will easily be pull'd down & refitted for his new purpose, but he says all this in shocking Yorkshire dialect: he calls columns kullums, & will absolutely disgust your southern ear whenever he has the honour of an interview with you. If you can get over this (w<sup>ch</sup> I know, & Michael knows, is impossible), you will find him wonderfully adroit in expediency, & a greater master in Architectural ways & means than Lord North, or even S<sup>r</sup>. Gray Cooper, is in

political. I inclose a paper he left with me, w<sup>ch</sup> he wishes you would order any common workman you have to make a drawing after, to be ready against he comes to Town, w<sup>ch</sup> he means to do the first week in May with Mr. Mellish. He is now absent, but will return here on the 1st, and has promis'd then to see me; therefore, as there is time to write me another letter, you will please to let me hear from you if you have any thing more to say before you see him. My advice is that you should carry him down (incog. travelling like my Lord Bute) to Nuneham; this would not deprive the nation of your Parliamentary Services above three days (& the Nation, God bless it, I dare say would part with all Parliamentary services very willingly, & still wag its tail at its master & look as pleas'd as druid) but this in a parenthesis. I say if you would do this, the figur'd plan might be ordered to be ready for his inspection, and thus provided, he would be enabled to do more in half a day in fully contriving all you want or wish (changing his plan every half hour in correspondence with your wants & your wishes) than he could do by a thousand letters, or twenty *tête a tête* in the room at Harcourt House, where hangs my tuneful portrait.

"In your two former letters I concluded by laying so much stress on a whole wing for yourself and your Lady, that your principal view in

making the propos'd alterations was to do like other Lords & Ladys, & make the house itself unnessesary to be liv'd in & only to be seen, but your last letter seems much more reasonable. I verily beleive if you continue in this humour, Car will make you an excellent house under the price you seem to fix, but then (as I don't intend to say a word to him about that matter) ask him, after he has settled the plan to your mind, what he thinks it may be executed for, and if he says for £2,000 or £2,050, call it in your own idea £5,000, & you will not be dissapointed. I say not this to depreciate my friend Car, but to shew you that this is the case in all Architectural or even common building estimates°.

"God bless you for your protest. Go on protesting and protesting to the end of the very short chapter of our national freedom, or rather our national existence, for the former chapter is already ended. Your protests will do no good, but posterity will learn by them that you was an honest man, & sincerely prized as such by

"Your affectionate Servant,

"W. MASON.

"My best & kindest respects to Lady Harcourt."

° This was a larger sum than Lord Harcourt chose to spend ; though half a century later Archbishop Harcourt spent £40,000 in additional building, and £30,000 in additional furniture for the house : doubtless Car's scheme was the best ; Sir R. Smirke was responsible for the Archbishop's alterations.



" *York, April 24th, 1778.*

" . . . . . I am very sorry that Mr. Whitehead would not take the hint I gave him, and set his next Ode & all his future Odes to the tune of the Black Sanctus; the measure is so excellent and so clear, too, to the understanding of the hearers. You will find it in S<sup>r</sup>. John Hawkins' valuable Appendix to his more valuable History; it is also in a book called *Nugæ Antiquæ*. I send two Stanzas by way of a beginning, and I desire you will get them perform'd, in order to convince him what an effect such an Ode would have when all the chappel royal are join'd in its execution; but this effect will appear nothing without the original music.

1st.

" 'Thou whom we yearly celebrate  
In Birthday Odes right delicate,  
And loyally do execrate  
Yankees that scorn thy royal state.

2nd.

" 'Now thou hast lost America,  
Mind what thy subjects sing and say;  
The tax on servants take away,  
And that on houses too, we pray,' &c.

" I am certain an Ode written in this spirit, and sung in the antient orthodox canon, would have more effect than all the petitions & remonstrances



ever presented or that ever will be presented. And as there is nothing else left us to try, why not try this innocent experiment? . . . .

“Your Lordship’s

“Most *devouée*,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, June 8th, 1778.*

“MON CHER MI LORD,— . . . . As far as the building a Bower goes, I think a man may indulge his Architectural fancy even in these wretched & villainous times, but not a jott further. I therefore seriously advise your Lordship, whether you be rich or poor, to postpone all more extensive operations.

“It is now morally impossible but that some great & decisive calamity must fall on this devoted nation, it cannot be too greatly calamitous for its deserts. Those only who have not contributed to the ruin (and these are very few in any party) will have the sad satisfaction to think that they suffer innocently—but suffer we all must. I write this under a self-conviction little less strong than the real spirit of prophecy.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I am somewhat consol’d to find that the Popery Bill setts many loyal hearts like your Lordship’s & mine much at our ease. A man, it seems, who is possess of an estate because he is

a Protestant, has now no right of inheritance or possession if a Papist is nearer akin than he. 'Tis a mighty comfort to one's allegiance. But you'll say this is only the case when the matter has never been litigated. What? were fifteen & forty-five no litigations? I'll call in all the Scotch Councilors to prove the affirmative. Strange that there was no proviso to except certain persons from that clause in the act! but I am confident it was left so on purpose, & much good may it do them who mean to benefit by it. I fancy we never shall.

"Mr. Walpole, to whom I had mention'd my visit to Nuneham, & ask'd whether there was not a probability of my meeting him there, says there would be 'had he the least encouragement, but that he is a little suspicious he is not in the most perfect favour;' yet he holds this by no means positive, & says handsome things of your Lordship. I send you this by way of a hint, that you may either regard or not, as it suits your *unsimple* & *uncomplying* temper; certainly he is as unsimple & uncomplying by Nature (or that *Art* w<sup>ch</sup> stands for *Nature* in your Quality Characters) as any Lord in the land can be. But he seems a very Carr when he speaks on your subject; but mark me, I say only *seems*, for I would not for the world tell a lye about the matter.

"Pray lay me most humbly at the feet of that

Phoenix of a Countess your wife, for as Countesses, nay even as plain womankind go, I hold her to be a Phoenix; make much of such a treasure, if it be but by way of a rarity, as a mere Virtuoso would do, and as I keep an old Simons's broad piece of Oliver Cromwell. My paper is fill'd, and I am ever,

"Your Lordship's most cordially."

*"Aston, June 20th, 1778.*

"..... I HAVE infinite objections to being scrap'd, & I beg & intreat that you would put an absolute stop to that scheme. I refus'd Sr. Joshua, who would have had a mezzotinto taken from his, and yet his is a likeness that would do me more credit with Posterity than Doughty's, w<sup>ch</sup> makes me look like the Le Beck's head in the Strand. All my relations here who saw it at the Exhibition cry shame on it. You'll say they flatter me; no matter, I will not consent to it: observe I am positive. ....

"My Lord, as always,  
"W. M."

*"Aston, July 11th, 1778.*

"I SEE plainly by your Lordship's last that you wish me to be at Nuneham when Brown is there, that, relying on my conciliatory & soothing arts, you may have the pleasure of putting him out of

humour ev'ry moment, and of treating him *en grand Seigneur*, and yet for all that get all the good you can out of him, thro' the medium of my politesse. Be it so, I will wait on you in September, and stay with you till my Town winter commences, w<sup>ch</sup> is about the time of your Lordship's summer solstice, that is to say the middle of October. . . .

“Adieu.”

“*Curzon-street, Thursday evening.*”

“I AM greatly obliged to your Lordship for sending me so good an acc<sup>t</sup>. of Lady Harcourt by the fair Carry; in return I can send you a tolerable one of Mr. Whitehead, to whom I made one of my first visits, tho' at the pain & peril (not of child-bearing, but) of seeing his guest, who told me I was grown grey-hair'd & intolerably fat, a sort of language that could not be very pleasing to ears that had so lately been inveloped in a Henri Quatre, and bore its flaunting honors with such agreeable *agacerie*. But I thought the horrid creature below my notice, & turn'd my attention to his host, who, tho' he has not lost his cough, seems not worse for his ev'ry-day chaplain's dinners, and was even then returning to them like a dog to his vomit, or a sow to wallowing in the mire, but I am persuaded he likes it; *tant pire pour lui*.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I went also to St. Joshua's, but the picture was still at Gaskell's for a second copy, & St. Joshua desired me to tell his Lordship so, and to apologize for not writing himself. But Charles, who had more *empressement*, went (as he tells me) to Gaskell's, and likes my Lady better than either my Lord or the Colonel<sup>p</sup>; his own picture of my Lord had the misfortune to lose its last painted eyes by rubbing against the post chaise, but he says he can easily repair them. Stonehewer thinks it very like, in spite of my Lady.

"Mr. W. is in a slight fit of the gout in Arlington-street, so I am in some hopes of escaping a visit to Strawberry (a truly Xtian hope). We are in high spirits for getting our East India men safe into harbour. . . . .

"My Lord,

"Most sincerely yours,

"W. MASON."

"York, Dec. 6th, 1779.

"MY VERY GOOD LORD,— . . . . I will resume my pen to expostulate with you on your terrors of cold catching at the House of Lords. Do not I catch cold by going dayly to the Minster? and praying as I do six times ev'ry day in my life for our most religious and gracious King? 'Confounding his enemies;' 'turning the hearts of his

<sup>p</sup> This alludes to the fine family picture by Sir Joshua, which now hangs in the drawing-room at Nuneham.

rebellious subjects in America ; saving him from secret conspiracies and open violences ;' 'deprecating all those unhappy divisions that call down divine judgments upon us ;' declaring that all his Councils are the wisest & the best that ever were or ever will be. Do not I do all this six times, nay, now that Parliament is met, eight times a day ? and that in a stall where the cold north-west wind whistles round my head, even to the derangement of my fore-top.

"Yes, my Lord, I do. By my Precentorial dignity, I swear that I do : weigh then my situation with your own ; and learn that the call of one's duty supercedes even the terrors of an ague. In the hope, therefore, that I shall hear no more complaints of the kind from you, I conclude with my best respects to Lady Harcourt.

"Your Lordship's truly devoted,  
"W. MASON."

*"York, Jan. 8th, 1780.*

"MY LORD,—I should have thanked you sooner for your acct. of the Episcopal Fête, had I not been so fully employ'd, as you know ; besides this, I had a story to send you in return, much too good for prose, & I had not a moment's time to versify it in till last night. And now that it is versified, I fear you will think it like most other things in verse, a Creature of Imagination,



whereas I assure you it is founded on a true fact, for w<sup>ch</sup> I can bring a grave clergyman to be the voucher.

“Count Smelt actually had a present of a watch from his gracious master, about which he boasted ‘that he had never alter’d the hands since he rec<sup>d</sup>. it, & never meant so to do, as it had been set by the royal personage who gave it him;’ this he said several months after he rec<sup>d</sup>. it, and when it was at least four hours wrong. With this explanatory hint I send you to my tale, w<sup>ch</sup> I call a moral one, because, like all *Contes Moraux*, it has no morality in it.

“Your Lordship will receive with this another newspaper, w<sup>ch</sup> contains the rest of our York Debate. But I hope soon to send you the Count’s speech in full, with notes *variorum*, in w<sup>ch</sup> I believe this very story will (in prose) be inserted; as to this in verse I desire you will shew it to Mr. Walpole & such other persons as your no virtue shall direct you to; by w<sup>ch</sup> I mean only such as you think will not suppose I imitate the style of M. Macgreggor, an author who, tho’ I venerate him, I would not on this occasion chuse to come in competition with, and indeed I think our two modes of writing are as dissimilar as Dryden’s & Prior’s, or Pope’s & Gay’s. . . .

“Your Lordship’s most faithful,

“W. MASON.”

“KING STEPHEN & HIS COURTIER :

*A Moral Tale.*

“AVAUNT, ye vile disloyal throng !  
Who think a Monarch may do wrong.  
I'll prove, in ev'ry rebel's spite,  
That all he touches must do right.

“ ‘ King Stephen was a worthy peer,  
His breeches cost him half-a-crown ;'  
In w<sup>th</sup> a watch this King did wear,  
All in a fob of fustian brown.  
‘ Heavens !’ (crys Dean Mills in sage amaze <sup>a</sup>)  
‘ A Watch—and worn in Stephen's days ?  
This anecdote quite diss-agrees  
With Holingshead's Antiquities.  
*Watches when first invented ;* seek 'em  
In Brother Trusler's *vade mecum*.  
See here ! *first brought to England* even  
So late as fifteen ninety seven.  
Now Stephen reign'd—’

‘ I care not when ;  
Doctor, you interrupt my pen :  
'Tis rude to check a staunch old Tory  
Thus at the outset of his Story.  
If other folks me tripping catch  
About King Stephen and his watch,  
'Tis meet for you to wink, I ween,  
You—a grave Churchman, nay, a Dean.’

<sup>a</sup> “ This character is only introduced as Grand Master at present of Antiquarianity, if I may be allowed to coin the expression.”



“With watch in fob (as I have said)  
Our good King strutted o’er the mead ;  
And met a Courtier, slim, yet sleek,  
With foretop high, & smirking cheek, }  
Supple his loins, his hamstrings weak. }  
Who crouch’d & stretch’d his beak before,  
Like Goose approaching a barn door.  
‘Hold up thy head!’ King Stephen cry’d,  
‘And walk a while on our left side,  
Sir Courtier! of our Courtly train,  
We hold thee a most gallant swain ;  
Nor is there any Squire we know  
Who speaks so smooth, or bows so low.  
Here, take this watch. I’ve set it so  
To tell thee when to come & go,  
To fetch & carry as we please.’  
He bow’d, & took it on his knees.  
Some six months after, scene the same,  
With cap in hand, our Courtier came  
To meet King Stephen in his walk ;  
When, as fit prelude for more talk,  
The King said ‘Courtier, what’s o’clock?’

“The Courtier, in his true-blue frock,  
Making a most obsequious slide,  
Produc’d his watch with humble pride.  
Then, in a soft and silken tone,  
Cry’d, ‘Sire! ’tis half-an-hour past one.’

“‘Past one! Odds body!’ swears the King,  
‘Look at the sun, ’tis no such thing ;

He's not near half his noon-tide height :  
Beshrew me ! 'tis not much past eight.'  
'Great Sire !' reply'd the dainty creature,  
'I rest upon my regulator ;  
This best of watches, best of things,  
Giv'n by the very best of Kings,  
Is ever present to my view ;  
The Sun may err, *it* must be true.  
O, ne'er shall my disloyal eyes  
Trust yon vague Time-peice in the skies ;  
That Sun, I thank him for his light,  
May shew me this more splendid sight,—  
This pledge of your refulgent favour ;  
But let not the vain thing endeavor  
To shine director of my time.—  
No, Sire ! this watch, both Eve & Prime,  
Next you shall regulate my motions,  
My meals, secretions, nay, devotions.  
And may you, Sire, w<sup>ch</sup> heav'n forfend,  
With one dread frown my being end,  
If e'er my faith so much should falter  
As dare the watch you set to alter ;  
Which, like yourself, both day & night  
Still tick-tacks obstinately right ;  
Whose ev'ry wheel disdains to run  
Directed by yon factious Sun.'

"King Stephen smil'd, & gracious cry'd,  
'Troth, thou hast taken the right side ;  
The Sun's a Whig, as we're a Sinner,  
'Tis time to dress, & go to Dinner.'"

*"Aston, April 13th, 1780.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . I think your great Lady's conversation is not quite to be depended upon with regard to the change of a certain person. I have had a letter from him written in high spirits concerning Dunning's & Mr. T. Pitt's victory, but reprobating at the same time our association measures. My idea of him is this, that he has no conception this country can be governed but by ministerial influence, and that he would not wish it to be governed better than his father governed it, & by the same means.

"The R. Party (who were brought up under Mr. Pelham, who was a sort of usher in the Orford School, & taught the same grammar, and whom the Duke of Newcastle followed as far as he was able to spell) are precisely of the same opinion. They have shewn it in all their manœuvres concerning our Association, & have, by so doing, lost every shadow of interest w<sup>ch</sup> they had in this county. This being the case, I think one has no need of calling in a General's influence of whom I sincerely hope better things than that great Lady insinuates. . . . .

"Yours most cordially,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, July 12th, 1780.*

"DEAR LORD HARCOURT,—I am return'd from my Northern Tour, the last week of w<sup>ch</sup> was spent at Hornby Castle, and a more tedious week I think I never spent. But it is over, Heav'n be thank'd! & I am again *chez moi* in my parsonage. Here, too, I mean to stay till our next committee meeting, w<sup>ch</sup> is to be held at York the first week in August, at the time of the Assizes, & I am the more detirmin'd to do this as I have just now read his Majesty's speech, a paragraph of w<sup>ch</sup>, that I need not quote to you, I suppose will be so largely commented upon by my Lord Chief Justice Loughborough, that it may occasion some resolutions in the Committee necessary to their own vindication; for in these days the best actions need vindicating more than the worst. On second thoughts, however, I question whether my Lord Chief Justice will chuse to appear in a place where his remonstrations are remember'd. Yet his Lordship is a Scotchman.

"Your political sentiments in your last agree with mine to an iota, except only that I cannot account for the Duke of R.'s behaviour respecting our Association Committee in Town; it is certain that he sent persons among the Deputies to vote against the resolution about annual Parliaments, &, to conciliate them, that resolution was couched in these terms, *not exceeding three years*. How is

this conduct to be reconciled with his bringing a bill into the House, two months after, that went a much greater length than ever we aim'd at? Mr. W., however, has congratulated me that the D. is on our side in a point where he is so much against us. I think in return I must congratulate him that the King is on his side, by his pointing out the dangerous tendency of *reform* of laws to his faithful Parliament. By the way, I have not heard from him since the Royal Reconciliation. Is he making up a new suit to go to Court in? if he is, pray help him to chuse one. But I suppose your Lordship is too much employ'd yourself on the same occasion, & I fear will only give him your second thoughts, fearing if his coat was better fancied than your own, the Prince of Wales (who I am told is a supreme judge in such matters) may speak to him longer than to you. . . .

“Yours most cordially,

“W. MASON.”

“*Newby, Aug. 24th, 1780.*”

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I have known many impudent things done by Bishops (& indeed, in certain affairs like this that referr to their traffic they are usually consummately impudent), but this goes beyond them all, especially as the man must know you have papers in your hand concerning him, w<sup>ch</sup>, if published, would expose him to the

contempt of ev'ry body but those of his own species. I thank your Lordship for the honourable light in w<sup>ch</sup> you represented me to him in your conference. Yet I am proud to say it was but doing me justice, for I would sooner starve than take a *provision* thro' the mediation of such a wretch. He must & shall be hitched into a rhyme.

"Yours most cordially,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, Oct. 9th, 1780.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I purpose to be on my wheels next Thursday, the 13th, & to go to Papplewick, near Nottingham, that day; the next we shall set off for Lord John Cavendish's, near Northampton, as fast as Mr. Montagu's pair of black horses can carry *us*, & my pair of the same colour can carry our *Gens* or *Johns* (w<sup>ch</sup>, when well pronounced, are two words very similar in sound); there we hope to arrive by Saturday noon, & to depart the Monday following, that we may not too much break upon his Lordship's hunting business. After a day at Mr. Montagu's Lodge, in Salay Forrest, I proceed *post* from Brackley to Nuneham, but then Bicester intervenes, and a visit at Middleton must be paid, or else, to use a vulgar proverb, 'All the fat will be in the fire.' Do you owe a visit there? 'No. I hate travelling. You must extricate yourself as well as you can.' 'Can you send

me a line to Billing, near Northampton, to tell me their house is full of company?' 'I wish I could; but they are *tête-a-tête; tant pis pour moi.*' Well! I will reach Nuneham as soon as ever I can. I wish I may have the comfort to receive a line from your Lordship, to tell me you have quite forgiven my absence from Aston. I shall have enough to suffer from Palgrave on that acc<sup>t</sup> without your resentment; the solitary Earl cooling his heels among my bantams, when the electioneering parson was getting drunk at York, will be an immortal topic of ridicule from that quarter. . . .

"My dear Lord,

"Most cordially yours,

"W. MASON."

"York, Oct. 28th, 1781.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I have never yet sent my present to Mon<sup>r</sup>. Gerardin, and I think I shall now stay till I can send him a corrected edition, now above half printed in small octavo, to w<sup>ch</sup> Burgh is writing a Commentary, and w<sup>ch</sup> will be of great use to foreigners if not to natives; from what I have seen of it, it promises extreamly well. But pray do not mention this smaller edition, because I mean not to publish it till the quarto be sold, and if I may conjecture from the little I hear of it, I fancy it will not speedily get out of the bookseller's shop. I never published anything



w<sup>ch</sup> I received fewer thanks for; that Episcopal presentees should be silent I do not much wonder, but there are others that a little surprize me.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"Make my profoundest respects to her Ladyship, & tell her that the impossibility of my finding phrases adequate to the sense w<sup>ch</sup> I retain of her kindness & condescention to me at York, is one great reason why I have remained so long in sad & blushing silence. The Morritts talk of her as of an Archangelless, not knowing, poor things, that Angels are of no sex; but the Morritts being old maids you know it is excusable, & so I tell Mary. . . .

"Your Lordship's,

"Most *devouée*,

"W. MASON."

"York, Jan. 18th, 1782.

"MON CHER MI LOR,— . . . . I congratulate you on the acquisition of your old tapestry<sup>r</sup>, it must be monstrous curious & monstrous ugly, and I don't doubt rivals that in the House of Lords in both these excellencies. . . .

"*Adio, Excellentissimo Signore meo, Adio.*"

"York, Feb. 9th, 1782.

"MON CHER MI LOR,— . . . . As to the younger Brutus, I own I have my feelings for his *Core Ab-*

<sup>r</sup> The Sheldon maps, now in the Yorkshire Museum.



*bandonato*, when he knows, as he must now know, that I do not come to Town this winter. But I hope Lady Mary Duncombe will console him, if *Mi* Lady Mount Edgcombe cannot do it; between two such *Idolo-meos* I hope he will find himself supported against all the *allegantes* in the universe. Tender him my kindest compliments, but tell him also, that if he had written me from Lucca a letter *absolutely his own* I should not have dropt the correspondence on my part.

"Your next letter will probably find me here, for tho' my residence is within 56 hours of its end yet I am comfortably lodg'd in the dressing-room & bedchamber (tho' not the damask bed) w<sup>th</sup> you & Lady Harcourt did the honour to occupy; and as I have ostensible business to keep me here, & as the snow is on the ground & the governor at Aston, I am in no haste to depatriate, or rather to patriate. The Dean, who preach'd an excellent sermon yesterday, & gave the Archbishop a lick in it, joins with his Lady in respects; so does Dr. Burgh, so does the Morritts, & so also does *Euryalus* to *Nisus*; Lady Harcourt included in all but by the last personage. I never writ so many compliments before, & I have done them so awkwardly I cannot get in my own without a new sentence—so hope for excuse.

*"Adio, mon cher my Lord,*

"W. M.

"I wish Mr. Whitehead would tell me what the Bishop and the rest of the bad company he keeps say of my sermon."

"*Aston, March 7th, '82.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . No vote of a House of Commons will ever be regarded while a loan can be negotiated, and I dare say, even by the time you receive this, you will see the scene shifted. I by itself, I (as we call'd it in the hornbook) will, however, in the end do its own business. And here ends my politicks. . . .

"Your Lordship's *devouée* *Serviteur*,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, May 15th, 1782.*

"MON CHER MI LOR,— . . . . As I find Malcolm Mac-greggor has again appear'd in the world, you surely might tell me, who you know think well of that odd writer, whether he keeps up his usual fun. I have not so much of the Cumberland spirit as to envy that great author his fame, yet I must own that I wish he may not run away with my readers, when I am about to publish a grave & high-flown lyric to Mr. W. Pitt. I expect, therefore, soon to receive a letter from your Lordship *sur son sujet*, & another *sur mon propre*, in due time; but I expect more than either to

know whether this wretched weather will not induce you to stay to crop a Daffodil from your London Parterre, before you aim at seeing a Lelac bloom on the terras at Nuneham; for my part I mean (but this *entre nous*) to wait here till you are establish'd in Oxfordshire, and then to wade to you thro' Towcester & Bicester, as I did once before. I am resolv'd not to pass thro' London for two good reasons: that I may not flatter ministers by attending their levees, nor frighten bishops by leaving a card at their doors; two resolutions w<sup>ch</sup> I trust your Lordship will approve, as the one argues proper self-dignity, & the other truly Christian charity. . . .

"Adieu, *mon cher* my Lor,

"*Votre tres obbeisant Serv<sup>r</sup>*,

"W. MASON."

"*Curzon-street, Tuesday, Oct. 22nd, 1782.*

"MON CHER MI LOR,—I have been at Strawberry, where I found its owner in good health & dispairing political spirits, w<sup>ch</sup> seem'd the higher for that very reason; full of old anecdote, but as barren of news as London itself, w<sup>ch</sup> does not seem to know anything, nor willing to do so till it knows something about Gibraltar. Yet, if I can guess from a letter I read this morning from Lord George Gordon to Lord Shelbourne, it will have something (at least) to talk of ere long. But to revert

to the Master of Strawberry. I deliver'd all your messages, so kind and so civil, but he seems to be afraid of the gout at so late a season, but at the same time does not bid me plead this as an excuse for not coming, but says he'll write himself.

"I have seen the new Opera House, wonderful fine, & what I should never think it hard to pull out a ticket if I had one to be let into it, to hear a good opera. But I don't wish to prescribe to other folks; I would rather wish them to stay at home, because they had a ticket & might go in without shewing it to the box-keeper. I mean if the box-keeper was anything of an old-fashion'd Christian, w<sup>ch</sup> perhaps some box-keepers are, & think (as our excellent liturgy, as I read it to Jack, teaches them to do) that a man & his wife are one flesh. Flesh, I repeat it, one flesh, to w<sup>ch</sup> I hope our excellent doctress will say Amen.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I ought to have began this letter with the thanks of a most grateful heart for all the civility w<sup>ch</sup> my Lord & my Lady conferr'd on their poor Beadsman at Nuneham, but it is better to do it late than never. O thou cursed evening post-horn! thou putttest me in mind of those three dear yellow, red, & blue creatures w<sup>ch</sup> I left to console my Lord in my absence. Thou hast the long-drawn drawl of the former<sup>s</sup>, and the shrill cadence

• Miss Macartney.

of the two latter. I hear thee still, but thou re-treatest into Chesterfield-street ; go, I beseech thee, to Nuneham, & if the yellow Mac. has left it, strive to compleat the trio. I am to the plebeian part of the family,

“ Their most humble,

“ & to the patrician part,

“ Their most respectful,

“ Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>,

“ W. MASON.”

“ York, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1782.

“ *Me voila donc, Mon cher mi Lor, enchainé pour treize semaines ou trois mois dans mon Bastille Ecclesiastique ou canonique.* I left Newby last Monday, where, tho’ I did some little to the flower-garden, I did nothing that will ever tend to make it rival yours, for tho’ its owner would squander hundreds in factitious ornaments, he is so *stingy* about a miserable grove of young trees not worth half-a-crown a-peice that no flowers, or even underwood, can ever possibly grow in it. In short, I am quite tired of *mon metier jardinique*, & am resolv’d to do nothing in that way for any body in future ; except, perhaps, making the projected alteration in yours at Nuneham, when the new-planted screen is grown thick enough for its purpose, w<sup>ch</sup> will certainly not be till the year after this ; till then my taste shall lie fallow.

"How was I dissatisfied by your four huge paquets w<sup>ch</sup> I rec<sup>d</sup> at Newby. I expected at the worst some fine new French *Brochure*, & at the best Lady Harcourt's Poems ready cut and dry'd for the Strawberry Press; when out crawls old deformity Hay, with his forgotten pamphlet about the Poor Laws. Why did you send it? Why not make Mr. Whitehead read it for me, as I made him read Bishop Bagot's prophetic Lectures? He would have rejoic'd in the task, considering how slight it was in comparison of that w<sup>ch</sup> he had undergone before. Then comes the country Curate's criticisms; of these, as you were sure that I should think exactly as you do, why pester the post with them? These, however, I return, and with them the Lady's letter. Leaving it to your Lordship to make all proper acknowledgements *de ma part*, w<sup>ch</sup> cannot be proper unless they break thro' every point of your Rousseauan code & lye most abominably; lye, however, you must for me either in French or English, but rather in French, because that language *s'accommode au mieux a cette Ton la*.

"I am glad your *Lieux* are likely to become sweet, but I still fear about them. I always suspected that the smell came from the great drain *under the house*<sup>t</sup>, and when a drain is so situated,

<sup>t</sup> This drain ran through a porous soil next to the well which supplied drinking-water! It was only removed in the year 1862.

& when these places communicate with it, & have not a drain appropriated to themselves, 'tis hardly possible to cure the evil. I am myself employed in constructing a *lieu* here in our new Residentiary house, & tho' I have many & great difficulties to encounter I trust it will turn out a paragon, both for sweetness, utility, & cheapness. Dixon<sup>u</sup> & I have this morning translated the very marrow of Mon<sup>r</sup>. Janino Antimefixique for the use of the Morritts, who you know are no *parlez-vousers*. I flatter myself that before my residence is finish'd there will not be a single *foss d'aisance* in this ancient city w<sup>ch</sup> will not be free from all exhalations *putride* & *pernicieuse*. I wish the doctress<sup>x</sup> was here to smell & decide upon them.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"I have made many alterations & additions in my epistle to S<sup>r</sup>. Joshua, & shall send Mr. Whitehead a copy for his criticisms in a post or two.

"I will finish this letter with a golden story w<sup>ch</sup> Miss F.<sup>y</sup>, if still with you, will sparkle at. Your Lordship knows that M<sup>r</sup>. Delany sat to Opie for the K.; the said K. also fixt upon two of his best beggar-men's heads for his Cabinet. The boy thought his fortune made, and put the three pictures in fine frames accordingly. In process of

<sup>u</sup> Father of the Rev. Wm. Dixon, Canon Residentiary of York, and Chaplain to the Archbishop.

<sup>x</sup> Lady Harcourt.

<sup>y</sup> Fauquier.



time his Majesty sent his Prime Minister in Virtu, West, to know their price, adding that the K., on this occasion, expected to be treated *as a private gentleman*. The poor boy was thunderstruck, & said if that was the case he could only say 'that he painted a head for four guineas,' forgetting to mention the frames. The next day the three pictures were sent for, & paid for, & his Majesty possesses the frames *gratis*.

"My best respects & compliments attend my good Lady & the whole family severally & collectively. I remain,

"Your Lordship's most

"faithful & obsequious Serv<sup>t</sup>,

"W. MASON."

"York, Dec. 17th, 1782.

"MON CHER MI LOR,— . . . I have not time to answer her Ladyship, except by saying that if she will put the term *distemper* out of the question, and send for a good whitewasher from Oxford, who is used to whitewash college ceilings, she will have her room better distemperatur'd, and 50 p<sup>r</sup>. cent cheaper, than if she employs a professor painter or upholsterer (my friend who paper'd the breakfast-room, & whose name I blush that I do not recollect, not excepted), the only rule to be given is that the best, i.e. purest, whiting be used, & the clearest size.

\* \* \* \* \*



"I hope to get Fresnoy out by February, but I cannot finish the new edition of the E. G. till Burgh returns, and of him I can get no tidings. Oh, I now remember my upholstering friend's name was Harsnet. I generally remember the names of my friends by their initials, and as H *non est litera*, but a mere aspiration, that made me forget him. You will say, perhaps, that there is no H in his name, but I say it is decent that there should, & I retain nothing but what is decent in my memory. The *Petit Pa*<sup>z</sup> has been here, & stay'd till I wished him away to make room for my associators. He talked strange things of the French branch of the Harcourt family, & says that he learned from the *Memoires Secrettes* that they were things of yesterday. I said I was glad of it, provided the English branch had Madam Sprote de Burgoyne entirely to themselves, as they certainly had. But there is a triple rap at my door, and I can no more."

"York, Jan. 5th, 1783.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Let me add a superlative degree of admiration to that positive and comparative one with w<sup>ch</sup> I have ever idolized Lady Harcourt as a woman of business. Her punctuality in proving, under the very handwriting of Mr. Jones, that my beaver shagg-coat is actu-

<sup>z</sup> The Rev. William Palgrave.

ally paid for is an instance of commercial punctuality w<sup>ch</sup> would do honour to a frequenter of Batson's coffee-house. But tell it not at Brooks's ! publish it not at the Pharo Bank at Cumberland House ! lest Prince Cloten (as Lord Lothian calls him) rejoice ; lest the daughters of Rachael Loydd (if she has any legitimate ones) triumph.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"I have made a visit of three days to Mr. Weddels last week, where the P. Palgrave now is. I read him your elaborate defence of the French Harcourts, but I cannot say it had that effect upon his genealogical intellects that you seem'd to suspect. But he is monstrously angry at me for blabbing his suspicions, and calls me a seive & what not. Yet I stick to my text, *Vitam impendere vero* ; and if the Ducal branch did not descend from Sprote de Burgoyne, I think your Lordship highly to blame for letting the *marked attentions* w<sup>ch</sup> that supposititious branch paid you pass for more than a mere chip in porridge ; for my own part I must be free to tell you that if I should have the honour to attend you on your next tour to Paris (w<sup>ch</sup>, if the Preliminaries of Peace are already sign'd, will, I suppose, be by the time I am out of residence),—I say, I must be free to tell your Lordship that I shall only pay my *devoirs* to the Marquisate branch, for I would scorn, I repeat it, I would scorn to take notice of any-

thing but a *real Harcourt*, having so long had the honour & pleasure to subscribe myself, my Lord,

“Your Lordship’s most *devoué*,  
“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, March 12th, 1783.*”

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I find myself very comfortable here, tho’ the snow has been in the air and on the ground ever since I came, and I have been able only to walk once round *my place* since I came hither. But I keep excellent fires, & Dixon, my curate, and a young Cantab, who is a sort of *eleve* of mine, make a very comfortable *Partie Quarée*. We seldom speak to one another but at meals; they read, & I correct Sternhold & Hopkins in the evening, and daub all the morning. I have erected my new organ, w<sup>ch</sup> answers *au mieux*, but I dare not print my new Psalms lest Bishop Birch should deem it an innovation, & therefore I am correcting old Sternhold just to take out his vulgarity, & make him passable, w<sup>ch</sup>, as the Company of Stationers have done it before me, I think cannot fall under ecclesiastical censure.

“I read nothing but newspapers, and I suppose know more of what that blessed pair Fox & Burke say in the House of Commons than you do, for I take in the ‘Morning Chronicle,’ and read every debate quite thro’. I think if ever there was a

nation that deserv'd to be p—st upon, or even (if the Doctress will excuse the expression) sh—t upon, it is the island of Great Britain at this present moment. If the Parliament in James the First's time was half as bad, Guy Fox deserv'd the Crown of Martyrdom for endeavouring to blow it up. But I say no more on such a detestable subject. They say your Lorship is going to France ; I hope it is only by way of calling on your relations in your passage to America ; if you mean it as such, I should be glad to accompany you....”

“*Aston, March 16th, 1783.*

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . I am going to-morrow into the East Riding, to receive my Michaelmas rents & to look after my landed property. My journey is twice as far as from London to Nuneham, with much worse accommodations, & not even the slightest hope of a three-prong'd fork. Nevertheless, I hope to go thither, do my business, & return here again before this day sevenight. *Go & do thou likewise !* for tho' I flatter myself that I have in Alderson almost as good a Premier as Lady Harcourt, & a much better than a greater personage than your Lordship either ever had, will have, or perhaps deserves to have, yet it is right for the principal sometimes to appear, even if he runs the risque of *belying* that constitutional

adage, that a Principal can do *no* wrong, w<sup>ch</sup> probably will be my case; nevertheless I hold it right to take the journey. Whatever Lady H. thinks of my doctrine I hope she will receive the kindest respects from her's and your Lordship's

“Affectionate Serv<sup>t</sup>,

“W. MASON.”

“*Curzon-street, Friday Evening.*”

“MON CHER MI LOR,—My imaginary business, as Lady Harcourt is pleas'd to stile it, is not yet quite finished; and General Harcourt has been so pressing in his invitation to St. Leonard's Hill that, was it only on the mere consideration of his being your Lordship's brother, I could not think myself at liberty to refuse the acceptance of it, setting aside the still stronger, tho' perhaps not so sincere, solicitations of what Lord Mount Edgcombe (speaking of *my Lady*) calls *his better part*. These invitations, however, necessarily oblige me to take another to my old good Dowager at Bill Hill, to whom I have many obligations, and to whom I cannot approach so near without incurring the sin of ingratitude if I approach not nearer, & who, tho' she was a boy in her youth, I esteem much more than such sort of *fine* women as will be girls, or worse, all their lives. But truce with reflections. I mean only to say that both these

visits must be paid, & a visit to Strawberry also. . . .

“Your Lordship’s

“*Devouée*,

“W. M.”

“Weymouth, or rather Melcombe Regis,

“Aug. 9th, 1783.

“MY DEAR LORD,—We are, after some difficulties, settled in quiet lodgings, but w<sup>ch</sup> turn their *derrière* to the sea, & therefore are not quite to my mind. The weather rather cold than otherwise, but the sea calm & comfortable, as I have already thrice experienced; the place very full of company, but to my party & myself a true solitude: we dine frugally and philosophically on a Piper, a Doré, or a Sole, as it may happen, with a plain joint of small Portland Mutton, a tart for our dessert, *voila toute*, *Point de Glace*, *Point de Compôte*, *Point des Fruits*. Your Lordship would die of it. But then we have the Bird of Paradise to feast our eyes with every morning on the Strand. And by letters left at the post-house we are to expect M<sup>rs</sup>. Thrale, who, as our imaginations tell us, is to bring hither the Colossus of Literature, Dr. Johnson. Should this be the case, I mean to shrink under Miss Fauquier’s hoop, take fast hold of her gum garters, and so shield me from the fiend. The Bird of Paradise having unfortunately

no legs would not, I fear, afford me sufficient shelter. The players, tho' announced, are not yet arrived. I trust I shall find many Siddons' amongst them, and shall be able to outtalk ye all in the theatrical walk when I return. . . .

"Your most faithful

"Ottoman,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, Oct. 24th, 1783.*

"YOUR Lordship was in so sweet a temper when you writ your last two letters to me that, after burning the first according to your commands, I thought it proper to keep a respectful silence till I might hope the storm of right honorable company was blown away, or, in the Psalmist's phrase, 'until their tyranny was overpast,' & when you might again think yourself in possession of your own *Lares*. But I rather think it was from your imprudence in sending them to St. Leonard's (I mean your two dear birds) that this tempest of company came so fast & continued so long. Recall then those household deities, & you will be sure of no noise but theirs to interrupt your slumbers. 'Yes (says the Doctress), so he may, I'm sure, from *me* at least.' But I have a better reason than the foregoing for my own silence. You must know, in my way from I. Dixon's to M<sup>r</sup>. Montagu's, I laid a plan for my Indian Tragedy, & not finding



Mr. M. at home I took possession of the remnant of his old house and there drew it fairly out on paper; this employ'd me the day I waited for his return. When I got home from York I resum'd my dramatic ideas, and have now, in the intervals I have snatch'd from making a new sunk fence, actually written the whole five acts, in my first & rough manner, w<sup>ch</sup>, tho' not legible to others, fully comprehend my whole design, and w<sup>ch</sup>, in my York residence, I think I shall be able to polish with ease. Tho' I have preserv'd the unitys even to French exactitude, I think there will be incidents & bustle sufficient to satisfy English caprice. And as I had Mr<sup>s</sup>. Siddons in my mind's eye all the time I was sketching my principal character, there turns out so much variety of passions in it that I believe nobody but her could perform it.

"Then as to my sunk fence, I undertook that at the same time, on purpose to convince Mr. Whitehead that I could make one w<sup>ch</sup> should be invisible tho' nearer my house than that w<sup>ch</sup> I projected at Nuneham<sup>a</sup>, and for w<sup>ch</sup> I suffer'd such unmerited ridicule. Therefore, if by both these works, of w<sup>ch</sup> I am at present equally vain (but chiefly of the fence), I can convince Dr. Johnson that a regular drama may have sufficient theatrical force, & my other critic that a sunk fence close under the nose

<sup>a</sup> That which exists between the pleasure-grounds and the meadows.



may be hid from the eye, I shall enjoy a double triumph; circle my temples with a sprig of my own Portugal Laurels, & bid the Laureat & Pensioner defiance. If you wish to know more of my combined labors I have only to tell you that my fence is 4 foot deep, and all my five acts three hundred lines a-piece long. That the fence ends in two clumps, & the tragedy with two deaths. That the former is broken by various intermediate shrubs, but the latter by no intervening Episodes. That the unity of place is as well preserv'd in the one as in the other. That one has taken up as much *time* in writing as the other has in digging. And that if when it is acted my actors exceed all other actors, as much as my laborers excell Oxfordshire laborers, my tragedy will pit, box, & gallery against brother Carlisle.

“Stonehewer, when you see him, will answer for me that I am no boaster, for he has seen enough of both my works to augure the best concerning them. Nay, he pretended he left me the sooner that he might not interrupt two such capital concerns, yet as he left me for London, & as I know he was seen at the ‘Mourning Bride’ in less than 40 hours after his departure, I leave you to judge of the sincerity of that speech. Adieu, my good Lord, I am horribly in debt to all my other correspondents. I have not written a line in prose this last fortnight, what more I have to say shall be in blank verse.

“See, I return you in this self-same cover,  
The letter written by the son of Brown,  
And dated Hinchinbroke. Much I rejoice  
That he approves my Epitaph, yet blush  
That he should title me the best of men  
As well as poets ; half ev’n of the last  
Is more than would become me to accept.  
Therefore, my Lord, to your own escritoire  
Do I return the writing. You, perchance,  
Before you give it place in that French archive,  
Will blot out Hinchinbroke’s detested name,  
Vile seat of Jemmy Twitcher. Yet methinks  
The proud antiquity of that fam’d mansion,  
Whose history I leave to Walpole’s pen,  
May plead for pardon, & old Hinchinbroke  
Attone for all the sins of its old master.

“Yet one word more ; a word to my good Lady,  
To whom I promis’d Cranberrys, alas !  
The fervor of this Austro-Gallic summer  
Has reach’d the moors of Yorkshire. Mrs. Thorpe,  
At once my steward, cook, & sage duenna,  
Says, ‘ that nor love nor money’ can procure  
That tasteful viand. Honest Harry Duncombe,  
My representative, & bold associate,  
Has promis’d Moor game. Yet (for so I counsell’d)  
He will not send them till autumnal heat  
Be chang’d to winter’s cold, else, as I fear’d,  
They might o’erpower ev’n Nuneham’s venison  
In rank *haut gout*. My Lord, I can no more,  
My paper’s full, it hardly leaves me room

To say how much I am your's & my Ladie's  
Most faithful, humble, & obsequious servant.  
P.S. No news, save only that Charles Turner's dead,  
The Baronet, and Member for York City."

*" York, January 19th, 1784.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I have not been better pleased a great while than with the news w<sup>ch</sup> I rec<sup>d</sup> the last post from Mr. Duncombe, that your Lordship had been at Court. In taking this step I think you have acted in perfect consistency with yourself, & have shewn the world that you have a mind superior to little self-considerations (tho' in your case they might properly enough be called great<sup>b</sup>), when one part of the Constitution is so manifestly in danger.

"That the two other parts were before in danger from this w<sup>ch</sup> you now support your Lordship & I have been long agreed, & have in our different spheres acted accordingly, in consequence of which we have been called Republicans & what not, but we have only smiled at the accusation; & now, when your Lordship will be called a king's friend, you will only smile on, if, indeed, at the present crisis any thinking man can smile.

"I had written thus far last night, when a letter from Alderson, rec<sup>d</sup> this morning, repeats the same

<sup>b</sup> Lord Harcourt's absence from Court was owing to a slight which he imagined had been put upon him after his father's death.

news. I only mention this to shew you my full approbation of your conduct on this occasion was ready before you did me the honor to seem to wish for it, or at least for my opinion on the subject; I must add that when my friend Burgh read that part of Mr. Duncombe's letter w<sup>ch</sup> related to this matter, he cry'd out, 'Well, this is generous, & as it should be.'

To Lady Harcourt :—

"DEAR LADY HARCOURT,—I have owed your Ladyship a letter much longer than my Lord, but as I have nothing to tell you except that I have actually finish'd my Tragedy (so far as I usually finish things in MS., leaving the last polish for the time it goes thro' the Press), I must beg you to deliver the following message verbatim to Lady Jersey, &, if possible, in the presence of her Lord :—

"MADAM,—I am commissioned by the Ottoman to tell your Ladyship that he looks upon sending a letter in a cover unfrank'd, when the writer has a ready means of getting it frank'd, as a very foolish way of shewing one's *ton*, and that how much soever such acts of extravagance may suit with your Ladyship's pin-money, it by no means agrees with the said Ottoman's prayer-money. I am further commissioned to inform you that he thinks the letter you sent him still

lighter and more inane than the French balloon w<sup>ch</sup> you ought to have sent him, since it contain'd nothing but what the 'Public Advertiser' told him the very same post; & lastly, I am authorized to acquaint your Ladyship that untill he hears you are become a king's friend as sincerely as Lord Harcourt & he are, he does not mean to honour your Ladyship with any further answer.

"I wish to know what are the state of Mr. Whitehead's politics at the present moment? I fancy if one was to ask him he would press his lips with his three fingers & say, 'I don't know;' pray ask him before hands, and see whether I do not guess right.

"Believe me, my good Lord & my good Lady,

"Most devotedly yours,

"W. MASON.

"I have actually sat another time for the finishing the picture for your Ladyship, but the varnish will not dry well enough in this frosty weather to suffer it to be packed up. Three weeks more & I am out of residence, God be thanked, Amen."

To Lord Harcourt :—

*"Weymouth, August 26th, 1784.*

"FOR Heaven's sake, my dear Lord, learn to direct your letters as the new Act prescribes; here

have I just now paid one shilling and nine pence half penny for Miss Fanny's paper 'Sundial,' w<sup>ch</sup> is a sum greater than I would voluntarily give even for her Fancy Tail. If matters go on thus with the rest of my correspondents I must run away from Weymouth incontinently, and that I would not chuse to do, for we have got charming lodgings that overlook the harbour as well as the sea, and tho' the weather is not to be called summer, yet, with a better thing than summer, sea-coal fires, we pass our time very comfortably. I have yet bathed only twice, w<sup>ch</sup> agrees with me, as it always does, exceedingly, and I shall not be in haste to break up our party here till Stonehewer sighs for London, of w<sup>ch</sup> at present I am happy to observe no symptoms.

\* \* \* \* \*

"We hear nothing of Palgrave yet, they say he stays at home till he has got in his barley. I think, however, he will be here in a few days. Lord Camelford is already at Boronnoc.

"I have not spoken to one Christian soul yet, except to those of my own party. I hear of nobody that is likely to make me break this comfortable silence, and what with gazing on the sea, & now & then painting on my Holy Family, I pass my time wonderfully to my inclination.

"I would willingly inquire after Walter and the Flower Garden, if my compuncions for now &

then treating him with such *rudesse* did not restrain me. . . .

“Your most oblig’d

“ & faithfully *devouée*,

“W. MASON.”

“*Weymouth, Sept. 16th, 1784.*

“YOUR account of the sudden death of poor Walter affected me much, I forgot instantly all his coxcombalties, & thought with your Lordship only of his humbler merit. I recollected an anecdote w<sup>ch</sup> I believe I never mentioned to you, that when I placed a stick on the spot where the vase now stands I charged him not to remove it, & told him that I intended to put the vase on a pedestal on that very point. Ready as he always was to give his opinion, he said ‘it would look very handsome, & that something of varse might be put upon the stone.’ I little thought at the time that I should either put his idea into execution, or that he would furnish me with the theme. Yet the recollection of what he said, & his dying on the very spot, has prompted me to write what your Lordship will find on the next leaf. My triumvirate of criticks here think the lines simple, inscriptive, & natural; if you do not think them all these in the extreme, I shall have no objection (after M<sup>r</sup>. Whitehead has revised them) to their being inscribed on the pedestal. But I would not

have this done with your Lordship's usual precipitation, because, perhaps, if I keep them awhile by me I may improve them. His name, with somewhat in prose, should be prefixed to it, but this must rest with your Lordship, as I know not how to date it, &c. . . .

"Your Lordship's  
"truly affectionate Serv<sup>t</sup>,  
"W. MASON."

### INSCRIPTION.

"HERE died the village Swain whose hourly care  
Taught this gay scene with richest bloom to smile ;  
Fill'd with fresh fragrance thro' the varying year,  
And but with life resign'd his willing toil.  
To his Memorial sacred be the Lay !  
Read it, ye proud, with no fastidious eye !  
But learn, with Harcourt's gratitude, to pay  
The tribute due to honest industry.

"N.B. *Richest bloom* in the 2nd verse means orange trees ; if your Lordship would have it expresst finer, read thus :—

"Here taught Hesperian flowers & fruit to smile,  
Fiori e frutti."

"Curzon Street, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1784.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I am glad your Lordship seems not to be precipitate about the in-



scription. The two last lines I am, on consideration, persuaded do not convey the moral I wish to convey. I want to tell the great that they would be very little indeed without the aid of honest industry, and all the compliment which I meant to pay your Lordship was that you knew this truth, and shew'd that you did so by erecting a monument to an industrious man. I first writ it thus :—

‘Sacred be the stone :

Pass it, ye proud, with no fastidious eye,

But learn, with Harcourt’s gratitude, to own

How much you owe to honest industry.’

“But the two words *own* & *owe* came too near together, and made a bad gingle. After all I think it would be best to drop the matter entirely; Mr. Whitehead’s verses (w<sup>ch</sup> he shew’d me last night), tho’ not inscriptive, have both more poetry & more pathos than mine. I like them greatly, and if they were hung up on a wooden tablet on the wall of the Orangerie would very properly commemorate poor Walter.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I talked with Mr. Whitehead about the alterations in the flower garden ; I find he has no serious objection to any part but that between the old tree & Flora, which he thinks too open, & in w<sup>ch</sup> he is certainly right, for a grove of tall trees was my original intention in that part ; the admission of

your orange-pots you well know was a sacrifice of my taste to your Lordship's. As to Miss Fauquier, who wants poles to be hid with laurels as quickly as those—what shall I call them?—belonging to the yellow maccaw, w<sup>eh</sup> ought to be cover'd with a thick hankerchief, might be, I have nothing to prescribe but one year's patience. Pray tell her I have seen the puppy, & that it is a most delectable puppy, & that I shall spend my winter evenings at Aston most delectably in its education.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have some thoughts on Monday of endeavouring to get into an attic to see the great air balloon go from L<sup>d</sup>. Foley's garden. I saw Lunardis ascend the moment I return'd from Hampshire with great contentation. . . .

"Your faithfully devoted Servant,  
"W. MASON."

"*Aston, October, 1784.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Lady Holderness told me that your royal visitors were vastly pleas'd with Nuneham, & in particular with that perfectly *easy* reception they had met with; this made me smile, but I kept my smile to myself, & only thought that *form* was *ease* in a royal vocabulary. This opinion I think your Lordship's letter authorized me to conceive.

"When I was in Town Sr. Joshua told me that

a picture w<sup>ch</sup> had been varnish'd with Mastic varnish (& consequently grown opaque), would recover its transparency if only well rubb'd with a dry silk handkerchief. I suspect that your 'Taverner' is so varnish'd, & therefore I wish you would bid Mr. Jacob try the experiment, as it is perfectly safe. He also told me that the varnish itself would rub off in a white powder under the pressure of the finger, but this perhaps you would not chuse to venture : certain it is that the picture at present has lost all brilliancy.

"Pray tell Mr. Whitehead that I thank him for the alteration in the inscription, but I shall not be satisfied with the inscription itself unless I can contrive to make it express what was my first idea, & this, tho' I have often thought of it, I have not yet hit upon. . . .

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Your sincerely faithful Servant,

"W. MASON.

"I left Alderson in Town waiting for the return of the great seal from Lord Gower's or Buxton, where the Chancellor now is ; but he desired, when I next writ to your Lordship, that I would make his most respectful acknowledgments to you, not only for what you had said of him in your letter to me, but also in that w<sup>ch</sup> you writ to Lady Holder-nesse. I am glad your alteration in the flower

garden pleases you ; I own that part appear'd a little cramp'd, but this merely from the laurels not entirely hiding the pole, but I have always found that when they *are* grown the nearer the pole the better, because they grow thicker at the bottom. I wish you had told me what my Lord of Sarum thought of the York *Te Deum*, tho' I know it was wretchedly perform'd."

"*Aston, October 20th, 1784.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . I am sincerely glad to find you venture on altering the flower garden yourself, it will give you much additional pleasure, & the spot additional beauty ; for, indeed, it wants thinning of shrubbs, & you could not thin amiss, even if you had a less picturesque eye than you allow yourself to have. Pray tell M<sup>rs</sup>. Harcourt, with my best respects, that her charming drawing caught my eye when I came home with peculiar beauty. Lay me at the Lady of the Bedchamber's feet, & bid her not forget the Professorship in lieu of the Cranberries. . . .

"Believe me, my good Lord,

"Most truly yours,

"W. MASON.

"POSTSCRIPT (to be read first).

". . . . As to M<sup>r</sup>. Whitehead and his yaw yaw, I regard him not. Had he a grain of grati-

tude in him he would have writ me a full and true account of the Oxford Balloon. However, I have made up my own mind about it. I know for certain, by its falling in S<sup>r</sup>. William Lee's grounds, that the conversion of the Jews is at hand, & that they and the coalition with Charles Fox, & Lord George Gordon at their head, will hold a Sanhedrim in S<sup>t</sup>. Stephen's Chappel before this time twelve month. Was I not a true prophet concerning your Lordship & the Humstrums? how, then, can I now become Apocryphal? . . . ."

*"Aston, December 26th, 1784.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . I should like vastly to know how M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons comports herself in M<sup>r</sup>. Cumberland's 'Carmelite,' and whether the 'Carmelite' be as good as M<sup>r</sup>. Jacob's 'Caromel'; this is not meant as a pun neither. God be thank'd, the papers tell me enough of Dr. Johnson's will & funeral. But I am sadly at a loss for news since I lost my strawberry-hill evening post, and I would almost commence a correspondence for *very, very* true intelligence, if it would not come to me in a more illegible hand than Lady Harcourt's, the only hand w<sup>ch</sup>, in my present mood, I would take the pains to decypher, being her Ladyship's & your Lorship's

"Most cordially & obsequiously,

"W. MASON."

"Aston, January 8th, 1785.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I scorn your words! I never lamented the loss of my evening post; I only said I had lost it. I am of old White's mind (a member for Redford in the Duke of Newcastle's time), who said when Charles Townsend died, 'Well, we have lost our champaigne, but I can drink port;' so if your Lordship will supply me now & then with — no, not port, it is too English, but Vin de Bourbon, & if Miss Fauquier will dash it with a little of her Nants, I shall live very contentedly.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I am ashamed I have not sent the epitaph, w<sup>ch</sup>, when it comes, I fear will not be worth sending; for I have of late hardly had one poetical idea, yet never so studious or so well employed as I have been these last two months. I have, however, nearly finished what I was about, & will soon try to make the inscription more to my mind, but I know it will be too simple to be relished by those who come to see the flower garden.

"My halcyon quiet is going soon to be disturb'd by a county meeting, w<sup>ch</sup> *entre nous*, & quite *entre nous*, is much against my judgment, & therefore I have done all I could to prevent it. We may, perhaps, make a better figure than I fear we shall, but if we do, it will be from a superior weight of folly on the other side.

"Your Lordship talks of the Queen of France & Lady Salisbury, I have never heard a syllable about either of them, and very little ev'n of Dr. Johnson; so I beg when you convert yourself either into a morning Herald, or morning Post, or evening Chronicle, you would be a little more explicit. I think Mr. Whitehead's Ode a very, very good one, but tell him that the Americans & I think him an old fogrum. We know a trick worth two of that w<sup>ch</sup> he would palaver us into. I wonder folks that are poets should on that acct think themselves prophets, I thank my stars I never committed such a folly.

"I conclude with the following seasonable wish:—

'May many happy years return  
To you and Lady Harcourt;  
May she have many a happy month  
Of waiting in our rare Court.  
And, when your Lordship goes to court,  
May you hear royal speeches,  
W<sup>ch</sup> will not make you seem so tir'd,  
As when poor Laudy preaches.'

"So no more at present

"From your Lordship's obsequious Serv<sup>t</sup>,

"W. MASON."



"Aston, January 19th, 1785.

"MY DEAR LORD,—Porter in your teeth! your face! nay even your new birthday coat! I protest what you last sent me was genuine champagne. *Œil* (I can't make the right diphthong) *de perdrix, ma foi, veritable!* 'Tis true it was not of that spitfire sort that I have had from *another wine merchant*<sup>c</sup>, in w<sup>ch</sup> I always suspected a considerable dash of perry, but it sparkled in the glass, had a fine relish, & did not get into one's nose, as the other did. But remember, my order was not for champagne, I cannot afford to pay for it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"As to my newspaper, it is only the 'St. James's,' & it has only for the last two posts taken up the subject of Dr. Johnson, of the other two topics it has been absolutely silent. Thank you for your information. I am glad that the French are as wicked & as foolish as we are; the more the merrier. If ever I go to France it shall be in an air balloon, with one ready at Calais to bring me back again, or carry me wherever the wind drives.

"I am not classical enough to remember Mrs. Montagu's allusion, but I think she would have been one of the (not Jack, but) Jenny Daws, who would have attended the Dr.'s funeral had he not been flippant about Lord Littleton. Mercy on us! she talks of a decline of the Empire! 'tis

<sup>c</sup> Meaning Horace Walpole.



worse treason than I have written to Mrs. Delany. . . .

“Your Lordship’s *devouè*,  
 “& *tres obligè*,  
 “W. MASON.”

“*Aston, February 2nd, 1785.*

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Younge, in his ‘Night Thoughts,’ is the easiest of all authors to imitate, as Mr. Whitehead will tell you, who made an excellent parody of them thirty years ago, when they were in high vogue here, till we exchang’d him with Germany for Handel, who is a musical Dr. Younge, and suits our taste here in music just as the other suits the Helvetic body in poetry. But this puts me in mind of answering your Montaguian paragraph. I am surprized *you* should mistake what I said about genius ; God forbid I should be so unthankful to Providence as either to suppose or even to say that I had no particle of that divine spark. I only said that I had often palm’d versification upon the world for it, & that it pass’d for current ; & so I have often done, as you well know.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Poetical genius is a thing as different from a happy talent of putting wit into easy versification as two things can be ; yet, setting wit aside, versification only will do the business in an age which adverts so little to any true critical princi-

ples as that very enlighten'd one in w<sup>ch</sup> it is our felicity to live.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Your Lordship says that you suspect Mr. W.<sup>d</sup> is not likely to live long ; should he die I must rely on your friendship, & press you to be strongly active in getting my letters, &c., from Lady Walgrave, who I have good reason to think will be his heiress in chief. He told me two years ago that he had carefully parcelled all his letters, & left in his will they should be sent to the *living* writers of them. I hope this will be conscientiously performed whenever he dies. But I write now to urge this great favour from you ; I assure you I shall esteem it a weighty one, for the letters I writ him were generally the worst I ever writ ; the *verve* never flow'd freely, & besides this, you know many of the subjects must have been such as one would wish should not be made in any sort public, at least before I was dead too, and then let either St. John Hawkins or Mr. Boswell make their best of them, & publish them in the papers as frequently as Sr. W. Lee's cure of the *Catumenia*. . .

"Believe me most truly yours,

"W. MASON.

"Pray give the inclos'd receipt to Mr. Whitehead, and tell him to take the copy & read it for

<sup>d</sup> H. Walpole.

me, as I made him read Bp. Bagot's sermons about Antichrist; and when your Lordship sees Mrs. Montagu, desire to know what is become of Hannah Moor's other *protegè*, who you may remember was a beautiful young lady that laid every night under a hay-mow, because she had been cross'd in love; she, too, was of Bristol. I remember Smelt writ the story to York three or four years ago, but old Ann Morrit would not believe a word of it, for said she, with her usual emphasis, 'What? a handsome younge woman sleep under a hay-mow within two miles of such a seaport as Bristow? Mercy on her! why she would be ravished by the young sailors four or five times every night?'

"I own her argument against the probability of the story had its full weight with me at the time, & since then I have never heard a syllable about her; I suppose she did not survive such reitterated mischances."

*"Aston, July 3rd, 1785.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—When I am in good humour, w<sup>ch</sup> I generally am when I am quite alone, as I am at present, I am a most punctual correspondent. I therefore sit down to answer your last immediately. I am rejoiced at your acc<sup>t</sup> of your plantations, & as you don't mention the transplanted cypress as having suffer'd, I flatter myself

that my last vagaries of alteration have not prov'd unsuccessful. When I come next to Nuneham I shall shut my left eye as I go thro' the passage you mention from the library, tho' I believe it unnecessary, as it was almost blind originally, & of late is only on the recovery; the crimson, however, & the ancestry must be guarded against.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Your wonder that you should not find a parson to your mind is no wonder to me,—I who know you never was able to find but *one* in your whole life that you thought tolerable; and who but that one do you think can so far descend from the dignity of his profession to assist you in your dilemma, knowing as he does that you hold the whole order in contempt?

\* \* \* \* \*

"There is a young man whom I have seen, the son of Mr. Haggitt, near Pipwell, whom my Lady Harcourt knows to be a man of very estimable character, with whom I have frequently corresponded on the subject of that wretched Hoyland. I was instrumental in getting him a fellowship at Pembroke Hall; he has since been abroad, & was sometime in Lord Cooper's family at Florence, carried there by Mr. Gore, Lady Cooper's father. I have seen little of the young man myself, but his appearance is in his favour, & he would certainly never shame you by putting his knife in his

mouth at your table. Mr. Brudenel, the member for Rutland, as his father told me, is much his friend; and Mr. Gore, when he left Florence, writ him this character of his son: 'I assure you I have found him a very sensible & accomplished young man.' He is at present at Cambridge, and, I believe, Private Tutor to some Gentleman Commoner. If, therefore, you wish to inquire about him, I have given you the best line I can for inquiry.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

"I am rejoiced to see in the papers of to-day that H. L. Piozzi is going to publish anecdotes of Dr. Johnson. I take for granted it is Mrs. Thrale herself & not her *Tenore Sposa*. I am resolv'd to set her up against all other biographers of the Dr., and I will address my defence to Mrs. Montagu. . . . .

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours most obsequious, &

"What is better, cordially,

"W. MASON."

"York, November 7th, 1785.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . It seems as if Mr. Whitehead never burnt any paper, from that w<sup>ch</sup> contains his first thoughts to the finished copy. I believe there are not less than 9 or 10 of an epitaph he writ on Mrs. Wright, and so of almost

all his other pieces. This is strange to me, who hate the multiplication of MSS. so much that I have often burnt some too hastily. But what is most extraordinary is the preservation of most of his MSS. after they have past the press and become absolutely useless.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"I am also very glad you have employ'd Mr. Hyome for Courtenay Castle. Tedbury Church gave me the very highest opinion of his Gothic taste, and I don't doubt but he will make it charming upon paper, and if he does that I shall be contented, for I never wish it to be executed till your Lordship is as rich as Cræsus, and the tapestry as rotten as old Betty's worst under-petticoat. I am just now employing a joiner to make me a *facsimile* of an old chair in our Minster, in w<sup>ch</sup> King Edward the third, if not the first, was crown'd, & in w<sup>ch</sup> every Archbishop has been enthroned. I mean to leave it to Courtenay Castle in my last will & testament. . . . .

"Most truly & affectionately yours,

"W. MASON."

"York, Dec. 26th, 1785.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . Yesterday the dull uniformity of my residentiary dinners was *strangely* enliven'd by the company of that redoubted bear-leader Mr. James Boswell. Burgh was of the

party, & a more ridiculous *conversationi* never passed either at Mrs. Montagu's or Mrs. Vesey's. I began by telling him that I exhibited a striking specimen of Christian charity in giving him a dinner after his ill usage of me. He was all astonishment, & pleaded innocence. I then explain'd myself by telling him I was never once mentioned in his book, & that I thought the abuse of Dr. Johnson, w<sup>ch</sup> I was certain I could not have fail'd to have been honour'd with upon various occasions, was the thing I of all others most *ambitioned*, & that therefore if he did not take care to shew the world that I was one of those whom his friend the Dr. the most cordially despised, he would do me an injury with posterity.

"He promised he would make me ample amends in his life, & that he had materials for the purpose quite sufficient. I begged that he would insert them all, & on his promise to do so the business amicably concluded. By this little specimen your Lordship may guess of the rest of our talk. You will after all wonder how he came to dine with me at all, but as he had seen me at church, and had visited me in my last residence, I knew I could not prevent a visit, & therefore thought best to put on prebendal hospitality. There is a strange book published by a feigned name of Mr. Heron, full of the absurdest taste & pretence to learning that ever was written. I asked if he knew the



author. He says he is a Scotchman call'd Pinkerton, who lives at Knightsbridge; that M<sup>r</sup>. W. has taken prodigiously to him, & has him frequently at Strawberry Hill. I cannot conceive this possible. Pray try to find out the truth. I want much to see Cumberland's character of Lord George Germaine, but you will be the best judge whether that want is worth satisfying, & if you think so will satisfy it at the small, tho' perhaps too great, expense of sixpence. . . .

"Yours most devotedly,

"W. MASON."

"York, Jan. 25th, 1786.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I hasten to answer your last, well conceiving what a fidget you must be in, and not in the least adverting to the space of six months w<sup>ch</sup> you have to turn yourself in, nor to the talent w<sup>ch</sup> you know you possess of parrying the attacks of pressing, & perhaps impertinent, solicitation with cool civility & *treble-refined* politeness. I use your own epithet because it is the best possible to use on the occasion, and because the best use that such politeness can be put to is the use you may, with such facility to yourself, make of it on this occasion.

\* \* \* \* \*

"As you seem to wish to know more concerning young Haggitt, I think it necessary (as your letter



leads me to do) to make some *covert* enquiries whether he be or be not a sportsman, for of this I am at present ignorant. I know he was blamed by his tutors for making frequent excursions from college, but whether this was for the sake of field sports, or balls & assemblies, I know not, tho' I rather think the latter, to w<sup>ch</sup> you will have no objection, as it must have serv'd to give him his polish.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I remember having seen him with his uncle at Vicars Hill about six years ago, that his person was very good, & manners very *prévenant* with me, as he seem'd to be endued with the greatest modesty & simplicity. God forbid, however, that I should assert that he is neither a knife-licker or a fork-tooth-picker; I can only say I did not remark that he was guilty of either of these mortal sins. I believe he certainly eat with a two-pronged fork, but this whether from necessity or choice I cannot aver. To be serious, I know no alternative between a young parson who has a tendency to a Bob Jerom, and a studious, & perhaps totally unpolished academic, in these times. . . .

"Yours most devotedly,

"W. MASON."

*"York, Feb. 7th, 1786.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . After all I must needs say that if I were you I would consider all I have written on the subject as mere waste-paper, and refer the choice of a rector entirely to her Ladyship; she has less whims, fancies, & vagaries, than either of us: for instance, were I to chuse I probably should chuse Holden, because he can play on the music, & for no better reason in the world. You seem inclined to Haggitt because there is the highest probability in the world that he will handle a four-prong'd fork in the true French mode; but are either your Lordship or I fit judges, with such prejudices about us? Now, as her Ladyship chuses your temporal steward, why should not she chuse your spiritual steward? You yourself have (or need have) as little to do with the one as the other, for it is by no means necessary you should give them a Sunday dinner, & I verily believe that half of the unbeneficed of the profession, after thanking your Lordship kindly for the income of the living, would thank you a second time as kindly for being excused from that ceremonial. . . .

"Your truly devoted Servant,  
"W. MASON."

*"Aston, near Rotherham (for  
I find on coming here that  
is now the best direction),  
February 17th, 1786.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . As to your report, it was general enough to have reached York before it reached me. I gave it, however, no credence before I thus received it. My reflection upon it is simply this: that as staunch a Monarchy man as my *wine-merchant*<sup>e</sup> thinks me, I am bold enough to say that the Constitution can do without a Queen provided it has a King, and, therefore, if during the next generation we should have none, I know nobody that would be injur'd except Ladys of the Bed-chamber (I speak this with *all* submission to my Lady Harcourt), & Maids of Honour (I speak this with *no* submission to my good friend Harry Vernon). . . . .

"Yours most devotedly,  
"W. MASON."

*"Aston, March 12th, 1786.*

" . . . . . I BELIEVE, when I talked of the maxims of M. de la Rochefaucault, I should rather have talked of the single maxim of my wine-merchant's father, that 'every man has his price,' for this I verily believe is the leading one in that person's

<sup>e</sup> Horace Walpole.

political code; but this will be better to be discussed in conversation than letter.

"I rejoice that the Jersey family will be benefitted by the late death, but *quelle diablesse*?

"Can you send me any comfortable news about my poor old Curate Delap's Tragedy? The 'Morning Chronicle' (in w<sup>ch</sup> a most formidable dramatic censor constantly writes) gives but a sad account of it: I have a fellow-feeling for all damned poets, after the private damnation of poor Anacovana, w<sup>ch</sup>, private as it was, amounted to a total extermination, owing entirely to Miss F.'s black eyes & my Lady's new birthday gown. Well, Taste forgive them! & believe me theirs & your Lordship's,

"Most devotedly,

"W. MASON.

"We have got quit of our bailiffs, and I am now lord paramount of Aston—Huzza!"

"*Aston, March 30th, 1786.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I sincerely rejoice to learn that you found your Rector elect so much to your mind as to externals, and I hope he will prove so in internals also, if you do not spoil him by too many *attentions* and *politesies*; at all chances you have certainly done an act of great charity, for the father, a most worthy man, has a very numerous family to provide for. You must expect to hear much approbation of your choice

from the Duke of Montagu, who has long known & respects the father greatly. By the way, that said Duke is at present high in my good graces ; he sent me lately a bill of two hundred pounds for the use of the widow Hoyland & her daughters ; this he did without any solicitation, and in a way highly flattering to myself. If there were many more such men in the world as his Grace, I am persuaded we could do without animal magnetism. But as luxury, & practical if not speculative atheism, increases as well here as in France, no wonder we fall into superstitious practices ; for fatalism is full as productive of its omens & prodigies, & as much prone to blind credulity, as the grossest religious bigotry. I am led to this grave reflection by the pamphlet you sent me ; it amused me greatly, & I will take care to return it safe. I take for granted the Cardinal de Rohan is as much of an *esprit fort* as Cagliostro is a clever charlatan, and I verily believe that the Q. of France would have faith in the Count's predictions. . . . .

“Your Lordship's

“Most faithfully devoted,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, April 24th, 1786.*

“ . . . . LET me rejoice that the choice of your new Rector is so agreeable to you. I repeat it, how-

ever, again, don't spoil him. Your Lordship's ratiocinations, or rather assertions, on this subject of spoiling have the merit of being perfectly characteristic, & therefore I like them much better than if they were logical, & should think it a sin to controvert them. I shall therefore take it for gospel that a university boy of three & twenty has an understanding just on a par with a man of the world on the wrong side of forty, & all the other paradoxes with w<sup>ch</sup> your last most agreeable letter abounds. I shall make, therefore, no other answer to it than that I sincerely wish they may all of them, in this instance, be found as true as at all adventures they are amusing.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I conclude that I shall have done Mr. Haggitt no harm by postponing my congratulations till his institution & induction were compleatly over. . . .

"Your most obliged

"& sincere Servant,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, June 2nd, 1786.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I have a great favour to beg of your Lordship & Lady Harcourt, & if I could join King, Lords, & Commons to forward my request it would perhaps not be unnecessary on so great an occasion; it is in short this: to entreat the Empress of Tragedy, who is to mount

her throne at York in August, at the races, graciously to suffer the whole family of Morritt to kiss her hand and invite her to a good dinner. But there is a degree of selfishness in this request of theirs, w<sup>ch</sup> I believe there commonly is in ev'ry expression of loyalty: they want by this means to procure for poor M<sup>rs</sup>. Ann a great pleasure from a very little of her *recitation*. You know that I believe this good woman has now nothing but her intellect left, but this in as perfect a degree as ever, therefore your Lordship can easily guess what a supreme treat this would be to her, and I need not say a syllable more to touch Lady Harcourt's & your humanity on the occasion.

"You will, perhaps, ask me why I do not solicit M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons myself? The truth is, that ever since she acted Elfrida in London I have looked upon myself as in a state of theatrical damnation, and therefore should never think of carrying my presumption to such a pitch; I have no other way, therefore, but by your joint mediation to expect this point to be carried. The rest of the family to my knowledge engaged one side of the theatre four months ago for the time she was to play in the dog-days. . . .

"I am, to both my Lady & my Lord,

"Theirs most devotedly,

"W. MASON."



*"Aston, June 23rd, 1786.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I had purposed going round by Sudbury, and I now find it will be much the most convenient so to do, as Chatsworth, whither I must first go on the above acct, is not very far from Sudbury, so that many miles will be saved by taking that route. However, that I may arrive at Nuneham the sooner, I will postpone my visit to Mr. Dixon at Oddington, & go over to him whenever any royal or too *tonish* guests (animals w<sup>ch</sup> I am equally afraid of) may chance to make my removal eligible to me, & not perhaps ineligible to your Lordship, as I do not believe that you would wish that birds w<sup>ch</sup> are *not* of a feather should flock together.

"I rec<sup>d</sup> your last very obliging letter at Rokeby, & that part of the family w<sup>ch</sup> were there desired me to express how much they were obliged to you for having applied to Mrs. Siddons on the occasion. I said all that I could in corroboration of your Lordship's good reasons that the party should be small, but without much effect, as the family, who are all equally desirous of hearing her, & think they have an equal right to do so, cannot be less than a dozen; they have promised, however, that no person except Mr. Burgh, who had already been invited, should be added to the persons in the house. I fear it will go off awkwardly, but it cannot be helped; nothing but the great desire



I had of giving Mrs. Ann a little temporary pleasure in her present deplorable estate could have prompted me to ask your Lordship to make the application. . . .

“Your sincerely devoted,  
“W. MASON.”

*“Oddington, Sunday noon, July 23rd, 1786.*

“MY DEAR LORD,—I am much obliged to your Lordship for letting me know what Gallic as well as *Jewish* society you are to be blest with untill Thursday morning. I deem, therefore, that if I arrive at Nuneham that noon, I shall come time enough for my own comfort as well as that of your Lordship. If, however, any new intervention should take place, as, for instance, the Prince of Mechlinburgh & his suite, or a dinner of bishops & Oxford doctors, I beg a line directed, not near Stowe, but Chipping Norton. If no intelligence of this sort comes on Wednesday I shall set out early the next morning; in the meanwhile I lump all my respects together for your Lordship to separate & deliver, except that with w<sup>ch</sup> I subscribe myself,

“Your devoted Servant,  
“W. MASON.

“Mr. Dixon begs his respects & thanks for your invitation, but cannot leave home at present.”

*"York, Dec. 11th, 1786.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—The embalment, as you are pleas'd to call it, is on the opposite page. I have sent another copy to Lord Jersey, & after your joint consultation as to its propriety, you must tell me whether it is to be midwifed into the world by my Scotch printer or be still-born. Burgh and I can do nothing about Carfax without a measured drawing. If it were mine I would make a house for Michael under it, and place it where Courtenay Castle was to have stood, but then that hideous tapistry—let us say no more about it, but congratulate you for having not only *Bocardo*<sup>f</sup> in possession, but Carfax in reversion.

"As to Mr. Haggitt's hill, all I know is that if it be not ploughed down before I come I can do nothing with it; if you only tell Jo. Sabull to make it such a hill as the elms stand upon between the house and the river, he will need no further direction. Mr. H. ought certainly to have all the land between his house & the pale, except a space of about twenty foot *close to the pale* left for a road; the ground marks itself. . . .

"Very sincerely yours,  
"W. MASON."

<sup>f</sup> *Bocardo*, the name of an ancient gate at Oxford, since pulled down; Mr. Mason, in derision, gave the same name to an iron gate in the wire-fence that for some time crossed the terrace at Nuneham.

TO THE EARLS OF JERSEY &  
HARCOURT, &c.

SONNET.

"ILLUSTRIOUS pair! who held that poet dear  
Whose blameless life my friendly pen portrays,  
And marks the merit of his various lays  
Where native Fancy flows in Diction clear;  
O may propitious Fate that merit bear  
To times when Taste shall weave the wreath of praise,  
By modes disdain'd in these fantastic days;  
Such wreaths as classic heads were proud to wear.  
But, if no future ear applauds his strain,  
If mine, alike, to Lethe's lake descends,  
Yet, while aloof on Memory's buoyant main  
The gale of Fame your genuine worth extends,  
Still shall our names this fair distinction gain,  
That Villiers & that Harcourt call'd us friends.

"W. MASON.

*"York, Dec. 11th, 1786."**"York, Jan. 3rd, 1787.*


"MY DEAR LORD,—As I have two obliging letters from your Lordship to answer I will take a frightfully large sheet of the English size for the purpose, that I may not seporate what I have to say upon 6 or 8 pages, w<sup>ch</sup>, however French it may be, seems to me not very commodious. And first with respect to the Sonnet, w<sup>ch</sup> you term *high*

*scented*: I have only to say in its vindication that in whatever estimation I may hold my own poetical powers, be that either too high or too low, I have so justly mean a one of the *taste of these fantastic days* that it leaves me no reason to think, much less to wish, that I should long be regarded as a poet, if the next age proceeds as rapidly as this has done to the very bathos of false criticism. If, therefore, I had not held the world to be *already* turned upside down, the thought w<sup>ch</sup> runs thro' the piece would never have struck me, but in this view the wish of being remembered merely as your Lordship's & Lord Jersey's friend becomes, under such circumstances, no ill-timed or unbecoming ambition, *voila toute*. If, therefore, the world should think that the Sonnet had a *fumette*, and should stop their noses at it, I would not alter an iota of it to accommodate it to their delicate nostrills. I shall, however, readily suppress the whole if either of my Sonnetted Earls chuse it; but as any subject is more agreeable to me than my own verses, I shall turn over the page and quit it.

“Your Lordship's intended new room for the *deposit*, or rather *gibbet*, of the tapistry puts me in mind of that laudable ambition you once heretofore shewed of emulating good M<sup>rs</sup>. Shandy; because you cannot hang it in the best place you are resolved to hang it in the worst, nay, to make

a good place bad for the purpose ; but I spare you. I suppose your request in your second letter of a copy of our cathedral chair is prompted by the motive of having it to sit in while your Lordship is in the solitary enjoyment of surveying that geographical treasure. 'Procul, Procul este Profani !' I beg your pardon for writing Latin, but I know you can construe it without the help of Mr. Haggitt, if you please. As to the chair itself, your Lordship knows I have an exact copy, or a *facsimile*, which, being a term authorized both by your Lordship & by the Society of Antiquaries, I hope, tho' Latin, I may be permitted to use.

"This chair, you may remember, I promised at my demise to bequeath to Courtenay Castle, but since that time I have unfortunately made it too modern to be any proper accompaniment to the said tapestry ; I have given it a stuffed back & cushion made of some crimson & black velvet, w<sup>ch</sup> my relation, M<sup>rs</sup>. Wordsworth, gave me, & w<sup>ch</sup> she assured me was my Great Grandmother's best petticoat. Now as I cannot trace her existence beyond *Temp. Car. Secund.*, & cannot prove that it was the first crimson & black velvet that ever appeared in England, tho' it is ugly enough to lay claim to such point of precedence, I should never presume to destine it to that honour. Add to this that I have ornamented the arms, legs, &c., & all that

the said petticoat does not cover, with a species of mock Marquetteria of my own invention, in a Gothic pattern w<sup>ch</sup> imitates old walnut-tree, box & ebony, & w<sup>ch</sup> forms the trefoils, &c. On the shield between the legs, a most commodious situation, I have also in the same manner, but with yellow on a scarlet ground, portray'd three passant animals—whether tygers or lions is left to the Antiquarians to decide—w<sup>ch</sup> have backs as long as weesels, so,— I just finished this most capital work before I left Aston, & it now stands in my best bed-chamber waiting for the Bp. of Osnabrugh to repose himself in it when he visits me in his way to his domain near Green Hamerton, where your Lordship once made so comfortable a dinner.

“Having now told you what my chair is in its present improved state, I will tell you what the original chair is in its decayed one. The bars that sustained the back have been long lost, & it is now cramped together with a piece of iron, the form of the whole is, notwithstanding, perfect; the wood it is made of is supposed to be beech cover'd all over with leather, pieces of w<sup>ch</sup> still remain, & over that cloth of gold & fringe, of w<sup>ch</sup>, too, there are a few tatters. Now the questions I would put to your Lordship before I order a copy are whether you would have it of the original wood, or oak? for either, without some added ornament, will be unsuf-



ferably ugly ; & 2dly, whether it would not be best to send the chair from hence in pieces ? for the whole will easily be put together by any common joiner if a drawing be sent with it, whereas if it is made up here and cased, the carriage will be more than double its worth ; mine, I think, made of Sycamore, cost either 20 or 24 shillings. As to the history of it, I will get Burgh to write it, with a charge to make Edward the First as well as Edward the Third crowned in it, but to carry its formation as far back as Severus, w<sup>ch</sup> may easily be done, for it is certainly more of a Roman than Gothic form ; and as the shield is of oak, a different material from the rest of the chair, there is ev'ry Antiquarian reason in the world to believe that a modern Anglo-Saxon appendage.

“After talking of this chair, it is letting my ideas dreadfully down to think about such a thing of yesterday as Carfax. However, I must needs say, both in Burgh's and my own name, that when the drawing arrives we will give our best opinions about it. In the meantime let me conjure your Lordship by the manes of Brown, & by ev'ry thing that ever had, has, or will have the name of taste, not to place the said Carfax in his part of the garden ; I am sure you will repent it when you see how incongruous an object it will there appear. But I fear if I say more I shall rouse the said Shandean spirit w<sup>ch</sup> is in you, therefore

I will conclude abruptly with my' best respects to my Lady, who I fear will not now have any time to transcribe the verses you lately mention. Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours very sincerely,

"W. MASON."

*"York, February 8th, 1787.*

"I AM, my dear Lord, in what Mr. Gray called the fever of packing-up, & on the eve of my residence, I can therefore only find time to thank you for your two last kind letters, & for the political pamphlet w<sup>ch</sup> Miss Fauquier sent me the post before, & for which, to my shame be it spoken, I have not yet thanked her. I think just as your Lordship, her, & the majority of the people of England think about it, notwithstanding the *people's* answer to it, w<sup>ch</sup> I have also seen. Had the party from whence that answer comes been till this time in power, I am convinced there would have been neither king nor people in the country; but one commanding aristocracy, with the East Indies in its belly. But I have no time for politics. The more important business of this letter is to tell you that the Regall-archiepiscopale chair set off some days ago by the carrier, w<sup>ch</sup> the inclosed card identifies, so in case of miscarriage enquiry must be made at the warehouse; 'twill, however, hardly arrive in Town till four or five



days after you receive this. 'Tis an absolute facsimile, with no addition save two bars at the back to keep it together instead of one iron rod now at the top. I am persuaded it is rather of Roman than Anglo-Saxon origin, and that the shield on the fore-legs is a Gothic appendage of yesterday only. You will find proofs of the same pattern & figure in Montfaucon.

"I have made a little alteration in the Sonnet in order to give it a more inscriptive turn, & an easier grammatical construction; to do this, however, I am obliged to discard the epithet *illustrious*, w<sup>ch</sup>, perhaps, neither of your Lordships will quarrel with me for altering, if you approve the other alteration. I write it now thus:—

"Ye gen'rous pair, to whom the bard was dear  
Whose blameless life my friendly pen portrays,  
Accept, combin'd with that, his latest Lays,  
Where still young Fancy flows in diction clear.

"This, as 'Variety' & 'The Goat's Beard,' &c., were written at an advanced age, I think will be more peculiar & appropriate: in the next line read *their* merit for *that*.

"I am sorry that your Lordship did not send the plan of Carfax as it is; I wish to know the exact height to the very top of it. I remember when we set up poles on the intended spot some years ago, we found 24 feet a competent height,

and I wish Carfax may reach as high, w<sup>ch</sup> it may perhaps easily be made to do by a little elevation of the ground, & a plinth either of common wall-stone or brick; if so, it will make a conspicuous object, &, tho' not a castle, will have an appearance of something similar to one of Queen Eleanor's crosses, & certainly appear monumental. . . .

"W. M."

*"York, February 17th, 1787.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . As Carfax is of the altitude of above thirty feet I have no fear of its making a respectable object on the spot intended for it. My friend Burgh, however, wishes for an alteration in its base, & having taken a sketch of it means to give you his idea in another drawing. I tell him I am certain you would not make a single alteration for the world, but he says, as the base is confessedly not the original base, he thinks otherwise.

"As to the chair, I am glad you like it, but I must needs own to your Lordship that neither of the two bars in the back are in the original, w<sup>ch</sup> is only held together at the top by an old iron curtain-rod, & the two upright pieces w<sup>ch</sup> that rod holds together are so worm-eaten that the joiner & I could not find where any bars had been inserted; for my own part, I am persuaded that there must have been originally a square frame in that part, stuffed, perhaps, and afterwards cover'd

with cloth of gold, for some of the fringe still hangs about the side bars. Without this I see not how it were possible for King Edward ever to lean his royal back against it. As to the rest, there is mould'ring authority for every inch of it.

"I own I am as pleased with Mr. Pitt with respect to his conduct concerning Hastings as your Lordship seems to be; but will every body be so pleased? are there not certain, &c., &c., &c., &c., w<sup>ch</sup> will warp the judgment of other folks? Has not Mr<sup>s</sup>. Hastings her friends? I have heard that when my sage Lord Mansfield heard last sessions how the said Pitt had voted in the Benares business, 'then,' said he, 'from that moment were his days number'd as a Minister.' Be it so, he will still be better in my eyes than a Minister, better than a Lord Mansfield, better than an Archbishop of York, nay better than——.

"I have heard, too, that when Prettyman kissed hands for his mitre of her gracious Majesty, she ungraciously refused to say a single syllable to him; is this so? Tell me, Lady H<sup>t</sup>., and twirl your diamond key while you are telling it. . . .

"Believe me yours as ever,

"W. M."

*"Aston, March 8th, 1787.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—. . . I will turn to that much more interesting theme, our Cathedral Chair ;

and here I am sorry to say that I fear the story of King Edward the Third's being crowned in it is apocryphal, and must have arisen from Dr. Burgh's mistake between his Coronation and his Marriage, for of the latter being solemnized in York Cathedral with Queen Philippa there is no doubt. I have looked over Drake, who, tho' he says 'that many Kings of England have been crowned in it,' mentions none since the Conquest but Richard the Third.

"For my own part, I verily believe the chair to have been Saxon, if not Roman; the half-circular legs are undoubtedly of Roman fashion, as you may see in Montfaucon; the shield is made of oak, w<sup>ch</sup> the rest of the chair is not; the workman guessed it to be beech or chesnut, but it is so very old and worm-eaten that it is difficult to determine the wood. Add to this that Sandford will shew you that it is totally dissimilar from all the Gothic chairs w<sup>ch</sup> he has delineated from Great Seals, &c., & also totally unlike the Coronation Chair at Westminster. Were I to say that I believe Paulinus was consecrated Archbishop in it in the year 625, or thereabouts, you would scout me, not only because his name ends in *us*, but because it is a date by 600 years prior to the building of the Minster; yet, as I verily think it older than the Minster itself, I will stand to my assertion, & call the shield, w<sup>ch</sup> is the only Gothic

thing about it, as I did before, a mere modern *appliqué*. . . .

“Believe me, my dear Lord,

“Most truly & devotedly yours,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, March 29th, 1787.*

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I am glad you have such a man as Mr. Haggitt with you, who is too young to be splenetic, & who certainly, as yet, sees the world as it goes in broad sunshine. Your Lordship, I fancy, does not always see it so, no more than myself, and therefore it will be well for you, for your own comfort, to borrow his eyes occasionally, & as old Richardson the painter said ‘he saw Homer & the Classics thro’ his son,’ for w<sup>ch</sup> Hogarth spitted the said son on a telescope, so do you spit Haggitt, but this only on very urgent occasions. My kind compliments attend him, & my best *devoirs* her Ladyship.

“Believe me, my dear Lord,

“Very cordially yours,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, May 23rd, 1787.*

“MY DEAR LORD,—It is now near Whitsuntide, & I have not (to my shame be it written) congratulated you on your return from so long & fatiguing a journey as you took at Easter, from the pain of seeing, not of eating with, two-pronged

forks at Henley, and all the other indiscrible *dissagremens* incident to travellers. But I am told you was amply rewarded by finding your new room turn out quite to your mind; I am afraid, however, that it will not turn out entirely to mine, unless certain of your oldest ancestors are removed into it, for tho' in the passage where they now shine with so much antique lustre, leading to the royal bedchamber, they cannot do much *national* harm, as our gracious Queen, I suspect, is past child-bearing, yet I am clear they would find themselves more at home amid the old tapistry.

"My advice, therefore, is that *the Knight of the Fancy Nose*, who came from Worcester, and *the Dame* with her hands so,



should hang over the chimney, and that the rest should be distributed in proper order between the windows, w<sup>ch</sup>, if they answer no other purpose, will save the expence of French glasses, and perhaps be as agreeable both to my Lord Leicester and my wine-merchant<sup>s</sup>, tho' the latter enjoys the unique talent of blending Gothic and Chinese, French and English, Roman lacrymatories, German teckel glasses, ivory crucifixes. Tuscan vases, &c., &c., &c., in one delectable whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have lost much by being so long in your

§ Horace Walpole.

Lordship's epistolary debt, on acct of the Richmond House Play, heir apparent negotiations, &c., &c., but you can make it up to me when you please. But I would rather hear about Merlin's Swinging Machine than anything that is done at Carlton House, and I am in doubt whether Dr. Priestly's letter about the Test Act, or General Burgoyne's Epilogue be the better composition; pray tell me.

"In the meantime I will give your Lordship a good anecdote of Archbishop Birch. When he heard of Mr. Pitt's first voting against Hastings he said it was impossible; but being convinced of the fact, he then declar'd he had acted *falsely, capriciously, & treacherously*: these were the identical epithets, for he that told me the story took them down. His Son, the immaculate resident at Benares, wears four clean shirts a-day, and throws his dirty hankerchiefs into the fire to save washing. I set out with only one anecdote, and I have given your Lordship two, match them if you can, even after reading (as I suppose you have done and I have not) Sr. John Hawkins's 'Life of Dr. Johnson.' I beg my best respects to her Ladyship, and compliments to Mr. Haggitt.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours most truly & devotedly,

"W. MASON."



*"Breton Ferry, August 23rd, 1787.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—You are, I imagine, by this time retired from the *Fête* of Royalty, and I am about to retire from the *Fête* of Picturesque Beauty, w<sup>ch</sup> of us the best satisfied I presume not to say, but this I must say on my own part, that I never beheld a scene, or rather a variety of scenes, more exquisitely charming than this place affords. It suits my taste much more than ev'n Mount Edgecombe; and Persfield, w<sup>ch</sup> I saw in my way, is a hog-sty to it, for the Wye there (which I saw at spring-tide, & consequently in its best colour) is always muddy enough to resemble the filth that animal loves to wallow in.

"Here, indeed, the sea-views, on acc<sup>t</sup> of the too-far retiring tide, must yield to Mount Edgecombe many hours in the day, but the land scenes are infinitely more bold and varied, and not broke in upon, in point of pastoral beauty, by docks & arsenals; and, tho' ev'ry thing here except the hills is on a much smaller scale, yet that scale is large enough for my eye, w<sup>ch</sup> loves a landscape better than (what Brown properly called) a stare, & w<sup>ch</sup> the generality deem a fine prospect. On this acc<sup>t</sup>, while other folks climb hills I keep below in the vallies, & do from taste what they think I do from lazyness. As to within doors, I have lived very comfortably, and of the bugbear Welch Squires which your Lordship



attempted to frighten me with, I have not seen more than three of them, one of whom appear'd with a bouquet so well arranged that neither your Lordship nor Mr. Haggitt would have disdained to stick it in your button-hole. Another, while he talked Stonehewer even to the very point of annihilation, gave Palgrave & myself, who sat on the opposite side, such supreme delight that we even expresst it in a way too open for the rules of strict *bienseance*, & were near being exterminated by Miss Fauquier for our *rudesse*,—and here the descriptive part of my epistle terminates. . . .

“Believe me, my dear Lord,

“Your *vraiment devouëe*,

“W. MASON.”

“York, Nov. 13th, 1787.

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Your Lordship's account of the festivitys at Windsor in your last gave me wonderfull, tho' I will not say compleat, satisfaction. The tilts & tournaments were wanting, & these noblest & most rational of royal amusements I dispair of ever seeing revived till, on the demise of the Duke of Montagu, you become Governor; then, & then only, & not till your Lordship has broken your first lance, or cloven some discourteous knight's helmet, shall I agree with you, that these fêtes 'were such as were proper for a King of England to make in Windsor Castle.'

“As to the fêtes w<sup>ch</sup> Princes of England make in our northern clime, are they not written in the ‘York Courant,’ & from thence transcribed into every newspaper in the kingdom? but I beg you to believe no other tales than those papers tell. That men were tyed up by the neck in sacks, & that pigs’ tails were soaped, may be true; but that royal hands were employed in either of these offices is quite apochryphal. Attend only, I beg your Lordship, to what is recorded of hawking with Colonel Thornton, for that is a legitimate antiquarian amusement, and was practised so long ago as when the two royal brothers, King Edel & King Adelbright reigned in Northumberland, then called Dūxa.

\* \* \* \* \*

“We seem here to be perfectly well satisfied with Mr. Pitt for keeping us out of war, & at the same time restoring us to our national honour, w<sup>ch</sup> to be sure has been so much *flettri* that I had despair’d of his political rouge to give it colour. The said Mr. Pitt we are told, from higher authority than ever spoke before in Yorkshire, ‘is a good financier, but would never do to carry on a war,’ a decent & a prudent assertion you will own to be made in public company. My truest respects to her Ladyship.

“Believe me, my dear Lord,

“Most truly yours,

“W. MASON.”

"York, Jan. 28th, 1788.

"MY DEAR LORD,—I am inclined to purchase rather than beg your pardon at present for my long silence, by inclosing an elegy, on the back of w<sup>ch</sup> is written all that I need say on the subject, only observe that it is the joint property of Lady Harcourt & your Lordship, & that you both of you are bound as *Bone of one Bone, and Flesh of one Flesh*, religiously to adhere to the conditions on which this poem is intrusted with you, & that if any person whatever should say that 'they are sure you would permit them to let them have a copy with my consent,' you must answer that you are sure I will never consent. . . .

"Your Lordship's

"Very devouee,

"W. MASON.

"The few people to whom I send this will be strangely out as to my reasons for writing it, but I will let your Lordship into the *true* cause. It was to furnish you with a number of *charming* reasons for converting your churchyard at Nuneham into a third flower-garden, *Verbum sat sapienti*, or *un Mot seulment pour un Philosophe !*"

"Aston, Feb. 17th, 1788.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Much as I wish for a speedy letter from your Lordship, I will not

promise I shall speedily answer it, for my attack on my Scotch doctors will for some time occupy all my thoughts; I write it in the way of propositions, & am so charmingly logical that it will surprise you. I trust if you read it you will learn by it to make a syllogism, a thing which I flatter myself the Master of Jesus was never able to teach you. Mercy on me! what a mercy it was that the *Prince* did not go to Oxford. How do you think the said Master would have looked if he had been commanded to creep on all fours with the pelican on his back, & his wife for whipper-in; 'tis a blessing such mischance fell on Mr. Haggitt & my celebrated University, & I hope he is sufficiently weaned from the paps of his *Alma Mater* to say *Amen*.

"I dread Lady Harcourt's & her royal mistress's frowns for what I have made my Quakers say to three august personages. Lay me at the feet of the former in a state of the most absolute humiliation, & believe me, my dear Lord (with best Compts to Mr. Haggitt),

"Most cordially yours,

"W. MASON."

\* \* \* \* \*

"*Aston, March 14th, 1788.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . If your Lordship has seen Stonehewer lately he would tell you all that

is decided about Mr. Whitehead's papers. I was heartily glad to return them, for having made use of so few in the *Life*, &c., the General's *better part* might have thought I kept them for another publication. I wrote by the last post both to Lord Jersey & the General, saying I had sent them by the carrier, but unfortunately, tho' I had sent them, & in good time, to the public-house here, where the waggon stops, I have since found that the said waggon, on acct of our wretched roads, went this last week by Doncaster instead of Worsop, so the box is brought back, & when I shall be able to send it I know not; I much wish, however, you would be so kind as to acquaint Lord Jersey of the cause of this delay, who will tell it to the General, &c. My friend Jacob would, I trust, willingly carry the message.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"If your Lordship wishes to see me mumbled by a true Scot in the most delicate sort of Scotch irony, you must look for an account of the *Memoirs* in the '*English Review*' of last month. My friend Murray is the printer, & I trust the writer also; I assure you it will entertain you extremely. Robson sent it me down in a packet with other books. ....

"Believe me to be, my dear Lord,

"Your dull but faithful Serv<sup>t</sup>,

"W. MASON."

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

*"Aston, May 27th, 1788.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I pity your Lordship, who is condemned to hear the eloquence of the Burkes, &c., &c., rather than that of Thrushes & Blackbirds, which are the only orators I have attended to during one of the finest springs I ever remember. One of the latter is now warbling thro' one of my *open* windows, to tell me that his mate is now hatching her second brood in my laurel hedge, with the same security that she did the same thing in the same place last year. I hope, however, you will be able to hear the same kind of innocent rhetorick in a little time at Nuneham, as I suppose when Mr. Sheridan has said his long-expected say, you will be at liberty to retire to a better atmosphere than Westminster Hall.

"For myself, I feel no kind of inclination to stir from this quiet spot, & unless Mrs. Verelot, when she returns from London, should bring St. Charles Kent into my neighbourhood, w<sup>ch</sup> family connections will oblige her to do, I shall hardly prevail on myself to quit Aston, & as I now take short journeys on horseback (indeed I do) I think it will absolve me from taking long ones in a post-chaise, for the sake of what they call that necessary thing, exercise. Yet, when I consider on the other hand that I am losing all my teeth, I sometimes think that this is the last season in w<sup>ch</sup> I ought to appear in what they call good company,

such, for instance, as come uninvited to Nuneham, before whom I should not chuse to mumble a French crust as poor Whitehead did; in short, I am at present undetermined as to all my summer & even autumnal motions.

\* \* \* \* \*

“As I have nothing further to say that may make this letter worth reading, I will get my curate to transcribe a little critique (much too panegyrical for myself either to transcribe or assent to) on my *Elegy*, w<sup>ch</sup> was sent me. It is certainly so well written that it will entertain you, but further this deponent saith not. It was occasioned by my saying that were I to publish the poem all the world would say I did it merely to imitate Gray's, & in this view, flattering as it is, it yet contains some just & uncommon discriminations. *The wakeful love* w<sup>ch</sup> your Lordship mentions is perhaps a little obscure; it might be alter'd to the *Wakeful Hind*, yet I think the hand in the next line personifies *love* sufficiently. I beg my truest respects to Lady Harcourt, & kindest comp<sup>ts</sup> to Mr. Haggitt.

“Believe me, my dear Lord,

“Yours very devotedly,

“W. MASON.

“Poor Dibden, who is going to the East Indies, has been a month in Alderson's parish writing his



Tour, to w<sup>ch</sup> I subscribed. It is worth your seeing tho' of a very Shandeian kind. He is an entertaining man in his way, & I saw him two or three times, but as it was after his book went to the press I escaped being mentioned in it, w<sup>ch</sup> I should certainly have been, we agreed so perfectly in our sentiments about Handel's music, &c., &c. Mercy on me! had all I said to him been put into print, Lady H. must never after have owned me even for a common acquaintance."

"*Rokeby, July 31st, 1788.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I wish I could transport your Lordship without corporeal fatigue to the place from w<sup>ch</sup> I now write, w<sup>ch</sup> is one of the spots where Queen Nature keeps a very magnificent court, with the Greata & Tees rumbling around her through a margin of rocks & woods of the sublimest cast, all of w<sup>ch</sup>, tho' almost contiguous to the mansion, is not seen from it, but in their stead a small park, w<sup>ch</sup> is as *peignée* & as *riante* as Wimbleton, & thro' w<sup>ch</sup>, with Alderson's assistance, I have made an approach of equal beauty to that at Wimbleton. Two sets of features so different, so distinct, yet withal so united, I think are not to be found in the kingdom.

"I left Mr. Gibbon where your Lordship did, at his two first volumes, since w<sup>ch</sup> I have just dipt into the last, and will venture to assert that those



who read them will read them more for the sake of the notes than the text, and I shrewdly suspect that most of our fine ladies will learn Greek for the purpose of relishing them compleatly. I should not wonder if my wine-merchant immediately took down his picture of Lady Craven, & put that of the Empress Theodora in her place as a lady of greater talents & a more inventive genius. Besides, an imperial w—— is so much more consequential, & so much more befitting the cabinet of an antiquarian virtuoso, that I think your Lordship should advise your dear friend immediately to adopt this idea.

“You mistook me when I recommended ‘Dibden’s Tour’ as a book for you to purchase; there are not above two or three letters in it worth reading, & those relate merely to Music & Handel; *au reste*, tho’ you will find as much self-importance & affectation as in Gibbon, yet here & there you will find periods more naturally turned than in that great historian, & in spite of trash & vulgarity, be led to hold the letter-writing fidler as high in point of real genius as the history-writing *petit maitre*. . . .

“Believe me to be,

“My dear Lord,

“Yours most cordially,

“W. MASON.”

"Aston, Dec. 5th, 1788.

"I ASK a thousand pardons, my dear Lord, for not having answer'd your last letter so soon as you requested me to do. The truth was I attended more to the former part of it than the latter, in w<sup>ch</sup> that request was made; neither do I now conceive that during the administration of Mr. Pitt your caution could be of much moment. That administration may perhaps even now be at an end, & if affairs take that course that they are likely to take, it cannot end too soon for his reputation, nor, as the Bps. say, for our sins. But truce with a subject on w<sup>ch</sup> I, who am so far from the scene of action, can write little to the purpose, *Parlons d'autres choses*.

"Your Lordship may remember that you requested me to write an inscription for poor Whitehead, and nam'd the place where you wished to inscribe it. An idea struck me, but I made you no reply, a way I usually take when I am uncertain whether I can write anything that I shall either approve myself, or that I think may satisfy others. However, I have made an attempt, w<sup>ch</sup> I send you on a seperate paper; if it happens to please you, & you should think of using it, you ought to be apprized that you will add to the faults w<sup>ch</sup> the author of the 'Royal Recollections' can find *only* to impute to Nuneham; that strange pamphlet was lately put into my hands,

& it shews clearly the spirit of the party w<sup>ch</sup> (to use the same episcopal phrase over again) is *for our sins* pre-ordained to govern this land.

“Let us quit English for French politics: Mrs. Morrit of Rokeby sent me the other day a French epigram at the bottom of her letter, written, as I shrewdly suspect, by her eldest son, a very clever boy now at Auxerre, too good a schollar at sixteen to go to college, & who, therefore, is to spend a year or two in France with a private tutor, whom I recommended. This epigram I have answer'd in the same lingo, *Voila ! Voila !*

## EPIGRAM.

“‘SUR le Lit de Justice,  
Ami ! sais tu ce qu'on dit ?  
Dame Justice est desolée,  
Le Roi le voudroit voir au lit ;  
On dit qu'al la vidée.’

## REPONSE.

“MON Ami ! je regarde comme les petites riens  
Les Nouvelles ce qu'on dit est certaine,  
C'est toujours la mode des Rois tres Chrétiennes,  
Dame Justice est leur antienne Putain.

“Mercy on us ! and send that in ten years hence England may not afford cause for similar epigrams. You see, while I am scribbling anything either to amuse your Lordship and myself, I cannot help

recurring to one idea w<sup>ch</sup> is ever uppermost in my head; indeed & indeed I tremble for my country. If the debates, or whatever passed yesterday, can afford any consolation I beg you to send the result to, my Lord,

“Your truly affectionate Servant,

“W. MASON.

“My best respects to her Ladyship, &c.”

### INSCRIPTION.

“HARCOURT & friendship this memorial raise  
 Near to that oak where Whitehead oft reclin'd,  
 While Art and Nature gave his eye to gaze  
 On charms congenial to his polish'd mind.  
 Ye sons of Fire! Ye souls of giant size!  
 Be yours to scorn, of Fashion's plaudit vain,  
 The bard that strove to please but not surprize,  
 That bade Discretion modulate his strain.  
 Enough for him, if those, the Votrys true  
 Of taste combin'd with reason, wandering here,  
 Give to their poet what, when justly due,  
 Surpasses praise, the tribute of a tear<sup>h</sup>.”

“*Aston, Dec. 11th, 1788.*

“I AM much obliged to you, my dear Lord, for answering my letters at this critical moment so speedily. I am indeed exceedingly anxious to know either the best or the worst that the parliamentary decisions will produce. Above all

<sup>h</sup> These lines were altered, and appear in the third volume of these papers in the form in which they were inscribed on the cenotaph near Whitehead's Oak in Brown's-walk at Nuneham.

things I wish to know how Willis came to be the person to whom this most important of all charges was intrusted? you know, I suppose (but *entre nous* be it spoken if you do not), that it was to his care M<sup>rs</sup>. H.'s mother was intrusted, & tho' he made a temporary cure once, if not twice, yet in the end she (at his house) threw herself out of the window; of w<sup>ch</sup> fall, after languishing some time, she died. Mr. Haggitt's father, with my concurrence, put poor Hoyland under his care, who, mad as he was, and as he continued to the day of his death, had yet cunning enough to be too wise for his doctor, & behav'd so as to persuade him that his cure was effected. He therefore dismissed him as cured, tho' to my certain knowledge just as bad as he went to him.

"He has, however, certainly had much practice, & knows undoubtedly the best mode of intimidation, &c., by w<sup>ch</sup> such unfortunate persons become tractable. Yet mercy on us! Mercy on the nation! to think that all we are, all we shall be as a nation, depends upon the *ipse dixit* of such a man. I wish I was at his ear to whisper him that in case the ministry be chang'd he will be turned out too, & our asylum doctor put in his place by the F. W<sup>m</sup>. interest, w<sup>ch</sup> is by no means an improbable supposition. . . .

"Most cordially yours,

"W. MASON."

"Aston, Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1789.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . I inclose a letter, &c., w<sup>ch</sup> I rec<sup>d</sup> the other day from Robson the book-seller with a very finely printed book called *Œuvres du Marquis de Vilette*. You will find for certain that this present was never intended *for me* when you have read M<sup>r</sup>. Henderson's letter, who, tho' he teaches *la belle & la bonne* English, does not seem to write it either *bellely* or *bonnely*. The book was certainly meant for a Mason<sup>i</sup> who writ an essay, w<sup>ch</sup> I never read, on 'Self Knowledge,' & who, as I always conceived, was either a Dissenting Minister, or a Master of an Academy.

\* . \* \* \* \*

"You perhaps know something of the author, who seems to me to have been to Voltaire what Bossy was to D<sup>r</sup>. Johnson; yet to do the Marquiss justice, he is a literary toadeater of as much more parts than Boswell as Voltaire had a greater genius than the Doctor. I have run over the pages and found in them some anecdotes that amused me. I beg my best respects to Lady Harcourt, & best compliments to M<sup>r</sup>. Haggitt, wishing your Lordship & your whole household many happy years. Le Petit Pa had left me before I could render *Les temoignages de votre tres profonde reconnaissance*. I suppose he is now in

<sup>i</sup> J. Mason, a Dissenting minister.

Madame Weddell's box at the opera, *ravi* with the enchanting tones of the Graziani.

"N.B. He has no more ear than a cat, but don't tell him so.

"Your Lordship's *devouée*,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, Feb. 4th, 1789.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . So now you have got a Regent, or are in a fair way to get one. My congratulations, therefore, shall be couched in the terms of the clown to Cleopatra, 'Yes, forsooth; I give you joy of the worm. This is most fallible, the worm's an odd worm. Look you, the worm is not to be trusted, but in the keeping of wise people; for indeed there is no goodness in the worm.' May the people be wise enough to keep him within these restrictions in w<sup>ch</sup> the wisdom of Parliament has endeavour'd to place him, Amen & Amen.

"Let us talk of tripods, or anything that will keep worse thoughts out of our head. Your Lordship has been, I think, much too hasty in mounting that hobby-horse; I told you that the precise size should be fixed upon at the spot itself ere one is order'd, else I could have got you one cast here of the size of mine for half the money, for the Rotherham works are adroit in such matters; but tho' my mock tripod does very well for mag-



nitude in my little spot, I am more than dubious whether it will do where you mean to place yours. The tripod in or near the flower-garden at Blenheim, I think, is of much greater altitude & dimensions, & it did not appear to me to be too large. Shenston, if I recollect right, says in his 'Detached Thoughts on Gardening,' that vases are only ornamental when they are large, & this is true of all insulated, or, if you will, isolated objects. But when they have a near background it is not true, & the bush in your flower-garden proves it. But the object in question is detached entirely, *ergo*, it ought to be a large one or none at all.

"As to the inscription, Critic Stonehewer is right in one of his remarks, but if the other be admitted the whole must be changed. 'Ye sons of Fire' was Whitehead's own expression, and an excellent one to mark those Churchilian kind of writers whom I address. I had once put it—

"Ye sons of Fire ! Genii of giant size !

and if this makes my meaning more intelligible I am willing to adopt it, for I like it full as well. But, as I said before, I looked upon this inscription when I sent it to you as a mere *ébauche*, to see whether you & our particular friends liked the general turn of it. I shall revise it again & again before it be actually inscribed.

"I agree with your Lordship in thinking that

there is no occasion for any prose to be prefixed, because your name appears in the verses as having erected it. My name also ought *not* to be subscribed; it is an unclassical mode, which, tho' Pope adopted and Whitehead follow'd, I never did in any of my Epitaphs.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Poor Camidge was with me a few days in the Christmas holidays, & much dispirited; as his mother, who had been about a year ago in the same situation as the K., & seem'd perfectly recover'd, had, after some months, relaps'd again, & is now deem'd incurable. He, I am sure, felt as all sons ought to feel on such an occasion. . . .

"Your truly faithful Serv<sup>t</sup>,

"W. MASON."

\* \* \* \* \*

*"Aston, February 16th, 1789.*

"I AM much obliged to you, my dear Lord, for the good intelligence w<sup>ch</sup> your last brought me. God send it may continue, for our all depends upon it; not but I have my fears that if his Majesty should even speedily be able to resume the Kingly Office, the motley disappointed crew would be so exasperated as almost to fly out into direct rebellion; that wretch Burke certainly would.

"Lady Holderness sent down the letter to

a member of Parliament to Alderson ; I have just read it, and think it a masterly piece of writing.

“Your Lordship blames me very justly for attempting to restrain your natural impetuosity, and yet I suspect, had I the honour to be as well acquainted with Mr. Edmund Burke, I should at times endeavour to restrain his. The fact is, that in both of you this said natural impetuosity seems to increase with your years, so that as in him, who is much older than you, it has risen from the utmost altitude of natural into the regions of unnatural, I have my fears you will do the same. Better, however, that it should be impetuous in bespeaking a tripod than in bespeaking a gallows, w<sup>ch</sup> you know is a tripod also of *giant size*, and fit, therefore, for his genius.

\* \* \* \* \*

“It is impossible for me to fill up this letter except with egotisms, and these I know would but prompt your sarcastic smile. Were I to tell you that I reduced the system of coloring to three pigments only ; that I am versifying the Book of Job ; contriving a flue somewhat less expensive than your stove to warm my rectorial pew ; inventing a new species of yeast to lighten my bread,—all these matters, tho’ true, & as important as they are true, would only provoke your ridicule. . . .

“Your most devoted Serv<sup>t</sup>,

“W. MASON.

“At your Lordship’s peril be it if your impetuosity leads you to inscribe the Tablet till it has had my last corrections. I have not time now to revise the inscription : I say, with Ann, Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery,—‘ my Name shall not stand.’ ”

*“ Aston, March 1st, 1789.*

“THERE is not a man in the kingdom that rejoices more sincerely than I do in the King’s happy recovery, nor, let me add, my dear Lord, more, as I think, sagely, for my joy first arises from the pleasing & humane reflection, that a creature of my own species, who had for some months lost his best faculty of reason, should, thro’ Divine mercy, so far have had that faculty restor’d to him as gives us good cause to hope he may be enabled to perform the dutys of that station w<sup>ch</sup> is allotted to him by Providence, with as much ability as he was naturally endued with ; & in this point of view I can safely say that I felt as much for him as one man can feel for another, yet no more than for many individual lunatics w<sup>ch</sup> it has been my misfortune to know better. I have heard women say, ‘what a dreadful thing to think of a King in a strait waistcoat!’ But, as a man, I own that I was struck with additional horror when I added another reflection to it, the ill consequences that might accrue from hence to my country. Then, indeed, I felt the idea in all its force, & predicted

in my own mind all the evils that his temporary successor might bring upon it in a single hour of ebriety, or even without ebriety from the influence of those wretches w<sup>ch</sup> were known to be his misleaders. My prediction was more than fulfilled e'er the event took place, and I have now only to thank God, & to congratulate your Lordship and all honest men, that we are now likely to remain a nation while the King lives, w<sup>ch</sup> I hope will be long enough to see me to my grave. But then—I leave the most ignorant of your footmen to finish the sentence.

\* \* \* \* \*

“There is a curious anecdote of Dr. Warren, w<sup>ch</sup> I wish were propogated. The winter before this our silly great Squire —— was declar'd by the Dr. to be afflicted with *a breaking-up of the brain*. This was the very phrase w<sup>ch</sup> the Dean of York told me he had heard that Dr. W. had used. I answer'd I had been told of such disorders as concussions of the brain, & I suppose the Dr. meant that; but the Dean was resolute as to the phrase. However this be, the Squire's brain is now, & has been for some months, so solder'd up by Dame Nature that it is just as good as ever it was, and therefore I fancy when the King's malady was first announc'd he did not venture to repeat his phrase, having found by woeful experience that broken brains, like broken bones, were curable. Had he used it, I

question not but Burke would have told the House that his Majesty was not hurl'd from the throne merely, but that his brain was broken never to be set again. This would have been a new figure in rhetoric. . . .

“Your Lordship's

“most devoted Serv<sup>t</sup>,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, March 17th, 1789.*

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . At York the Fitzwilliamites have been sadly overreached. The opposite party feasted early, & even before dinner sent a requisition to the Lord Mayor to call a hall for an address. This he could not refuse. All, therefore, that his party could do was to endeavour to make the address come from themselves. But this their opponents foresaw, & by a manœuvre made it their own, & then by greatly outvoting them obtained that it should be signed only by the Chairman, by w<sup>ch</sup> means they were prevented from giving all the expression of loyalty in their power, their signature. The Dean was outrageous, & got heartily hissed.

“I cannot say I have any great curiosity to see St. Paul's lighted, because there is no point of view from w<sup>ch</sup> it can be well seen but the centre of the upper end of Ludgate Street, a position w<sup>ch</sup> must necessarily be the lot of the lowest of the mob.

"Does your Lordship think it possible that Burke can ever shew his face again? I find Charles Fox has. But that *hurling from the throne* is surely what can never be got over. My best respects attend her Ladyship. . . .

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours most cordially,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, April 18th, 1789.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I do not feel inclined to finish what I have sketched; I like not by any means this parade to St. Paul's; and have disagreeable presentiments concerning it. Should it end, however, without any untoward accident, you will oblige me greatly by sending me early intelligence concerning it. . . .

"I am, my dear Lord,

"Yours most cordially,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, May 1st, 1789.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—Tho' May-day be usher'd in with a cold easterly wind, your last letter, w<sup>ch</sup> I sit down to answer, gives me sufficient spirits for the business, for indeed it has reliev'd me from terrible apprehensions, w<sup>ch</sup> did not arise merely from fear of the function too much affecting the King, but also from collateral, and, as I thought,



certain consequences to the spectators, in w<sup>ch</sup>, too, my other fear was combined, as I am clear that had a single life been lost among the crowd, that life would have been imputed by the worthless leaders of Opposition to his Majesty. God be thanked it is safely over.

"You are, I suppose, as much sated with illumination Historiattes as I am, but I must, notwithstanding, be the chronicler of one w<sup>ch</sup> I think so singularly excellent that I almost wish Lady Harcourt would communicate it to the Queen, as I am sure it would entertain her.

"The town of Sheffield, tho' immediately under the Duke of Norfolk (who is their Lord of the Mannor, & whose Steward wished to blend the rejoicings usual there on the Duke's birthday with those intended for the King's recovery, but very vainly), was by no means behind the rest of the principal towns in Yorkshire on that occasion. But my anecdote relates only to a poor *muffin* woman there, who, on a previous day, went to a signpost painter to order a picture of the King, that she might illuminate it with candles over her shop-door. The painter, knowing her poverty, hesitated to do it. 'Look you,' says she, 'there is five shillings in hand, & whatever more it comes to I'll be sure to pay it with ready money.' The man took it, but told her as she must have a motto it would come to much more. 'Motto,'

says she, 'what do you mean by motto?' 'You must have *God save the King*, or *Long live the King*, written over it in gold letters.' 'No, no,' replies the woman, 'everybody has those kind of words, I'll have something of my own. My motto (as you call it) shall be *Loyalty to the last penny*.' The good woman had accordingly her portrait & her motto for eleven shillings. Would not your Lordship eat a Yorkshire muffin with even a better appetite than you eat them at Harrogate, could you eat one of this woman's baking?

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

"I shall fill the rest of my page with my last transcript of the inscription, w<sup>ch</sup>, altho' not quite what I could wish it, is, I think, as well as I can make it, tho' still open to criticism, w<sup>ch</sup>, after consulting those whose critical skill you most depend on, I wish you to give me, & not to give it to the stone-mason till I hear again from you on the subject<sup>j</sup>.

"Believe me, my dear Lord, truly yours,  
"W. M."

"*Aston, June 10th, 1789.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I am glad you think the inscription improved. It is not yet quite what I would have it, but I find I cannot mend it, so it

<sup>j</sup> These were the lines which are now inscribed in the grounds at Nuneham.

must do as well as it can. I am clear that nothing but the verses should be put on the face of the pedestal; on the back, perhaps, it might not be amiss to put the date, W. Whitehead, Esq., P.L., died \* \* aged \* \*

"I expect the honour of a visit from Lady Hol-  
dernessee very soon, she is coming to Alderson's in  
my neighbourhood, & I believe she brings poor  
Miss Byron to leave for some time in his family  
with a *gouvernante*, but whether this be a secret or  
no I know not, & therefore would not have it men-  
tion'd. The wretched father, after having spent  
his present wife's fortune, w<sup>ch</sup> I believe was £3,100,  
is skulking in Town under a feigned name.

"I went yesterday to Thoresby (where a sale  
commences this day), to see whether there were  
any pictures worth bidding for, but found nothing  
of consequence. There were many biddets, &  
could I have found one authenticated to have  
been bestrode by her Grace, I would have bought  
it for your Lordship, & inscribed it, 'In Piam Me-  
moriâ defunctæ voluptatis.'

"By not having answer'd your last sooner I  
have lost, I fear, several anecdotes relative to the  
late *duello*. My paper, 'Woodfall's Diary,' is good  
for nothing save when it gives the debates, for w<sup>ch</sup>,  
indeed, I only take it in. I want much to know  
whether the Prince at the ball did really behave  
as some papers say he did ?

"Pray be charitable & answer this, tho' it be too dull & too short to deserve an answer, and tho' I can add nothing to it but my best respects to her Ladyship & Mr. Haggitt.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Most truly yours,

"W. MASON.

"The Siddons is to be at Sheffield next week or the week after, & I mean to pay her a morning visit."

"*Aston, June 18, 1789.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—My last letter crossed your Lordship's on the road ; I am sorry the tripod is too small, I suspected it would, but this comes of impetuosity. Mon<sup>r</sup>. Geredius' rule is certainly a good one, of trying effects by mock objects, tho' he carries it too far ; to a practis'd eye a single pole or post will be sufficient. I have thought of two ways of mending matters, one is by planting a clump of roses, buried pots of myrtle, &c., round the pedestal, the other is to place it under the tree itself, with benches on each side, in w<sup>ch</sup> case the 2<sup>d</sup> line of the inscription must be alter'd, and instead of *near to*, *beneath*.

"I think I told your Lordship in my last that Lady H. is coming here ; should she want an agreeable companion in a post-shay on her return I may perhaps accompany her, in w<sup>ch</sup> case I shall

endeavour to pay my *devoirs* at Nuneham ; but all this is at present unsettled. Respects & comp<sup>ts</sup> to Lady Harcourt & Mr. Haggitt.

“Most devotedly yours,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, July 5th, 1789.*”

“THE Countess came here, my dear Lord, so late, and (while with Alderson) starved me so much by prohibiting fires, that recollecting what I have suffer’d in the south from the same cause, I renew’d my resolution of never venturing my person again on the other side of the Trent between the months of May & November. M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons also fortified me in this resolution, & I have made her almost an absolute promise of meeting her at Nuneham after my residence, when fires will be established. She & her spouse past two days with me here, I flatter myself not uncomfortably, & I escorted them on Friday last to Matlock, a compliment I would not have paid to any of the blood royal. The weather proved tolerable, & she was so pleasant, so sensible, & so pleas’d with all she saw, that I thought myself amply repaid for my civility.

“As five weeks more will bring me into my state of captivity, to have come southward now would have been absolute hurry, & perhaps too much for me at my advanced age ; therefore I

doubt not but that your Lordship will take this as a sufficient excuse. Mr. & Mrs. S. are this day on the road towards Weymouth, whither I suppose her Ladyship & your Lordship will soon fly on the wings of duty, if you are not already fled. For as I do not find from the papers that you appear'd at Oxford in your Dr.'s robes, I begin to suspect that of two travelling evils you might chuse what you would think the least, & rather go ninety one way than six another; the supposition is surely in character. . . .

"Your Lordship's truly devoted Servt,

"W. MASON."

*"York, September 7th, 1789.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I have been longer than usual silent, in hope that the anecdotes I might pick up during the last fortnight might produce a letter somewhat more entertaining than my previous short southern jaunt could supply. But I have fail'd in my expectations, for I never heard *one* thing w<sup>ch</sup> the Prince either said or did that was different from anything that one of our Yorkshire squires might not have done or said, except dancing one fine *minuet*, & most curiously answering one of the most curious addresses that a most impolitic Earl could possibly have contriv'd to have put into the mouths of his furgowned puppets. But as you have seen his *mi-*

*nuet*, & read his answer, I need say no more on that subject. As to what was done at Wentworth House, that will also be transcribed from our county papers into the London ones for your admiration ere this reaches you. I could not, however, help being pleas'd with finding that acct & that of your Lordship's spinning-feast in the *same paper*, and I should hope the contrast would strike every reader, whose moral feelings were not quite obliterated, in the same manner in w<sup>ch</sup> it struck me. But there are men your Lordship knows who think Mr. Pitt unfit to be Prime Minister, because his leisure hours are not spent amid a crew of swearers, drunkards, & gamblers, & one of these who has deliver'd a similar opinion in the highest assembly of the nation, to him & his adherents the favorable side of the contrast will appear different from that in w<sup>ch</sup> I saw it. But this I presume will give you little chagrin.

“The Duke who takes his name from this sage city, had the sagacity to travell 1,100 miles in less time & with less sleep (as one of his admirers told me) than ever any king's messenger did. The consequence was, that on the day of his arrival he was oblig'd to take to his bed, & to put himself under the care of our Scotch doctor, who sweated him plentifully, after w<sup>ch</sup> his Royal H. prescribed bark in large dozes to himself. The result was that he was able the following Monday to set out



for Town, but as the papers say he did not arrive there till the Thursday, I presume his illness obliged him to cease his royal emulation of a king's messenger, & content himself with travelling slower than a stage-coachman. The Prince, I hear, in his return was overturned between Stilton & Rugden by a loaded cart, & two of his attendants, who rode on the fore-box *a la Française*, much hurt.

"I will not quit these royal themes till I answer a question w<sup>ch</sup> I am sure you would ask were I at Nuneham. Did the Prince see the cathedral? He walk'd thro' the nave with his suite, thro' the west door, peep'd into the quire, & paid 5 guineas to the verger, w<sup>ch</sup>, on the most accurate calculation, was more than a guinea p<sup>r</sup> minute. He sent no previous notice, so I thought myself absolv'd from even seeing him, w<sup>ch</sup> I had intended to have done if he had had a *levée*. . . .

"Most devotedly yours,

"W. MASON."

"York, October 31st, 1789.

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . The papers have repeatedly talked to us (for papers talk just like my friends the Morrits, incessantly) about Post Masters General, & Masterships of the Horse, annexing your Lordship's name to both these places of honour & profit; for my own part, I am for giving

your Lordship the former of these, merely because I know you can write a good letter, & because you cannot ride a good horse. But I have lived long enough in the world to believe that if either of these places fall to your lot it will most probably be the latter, & this for the above reason. However, as *self* always puts in an internal word on such occasions, I flatter myself that if a Master of the Horse (tho' God knows no greater as master of horsemanship than myself) should refuse next summer to visit me at Aston, & thereby repay the numberless prior visits, besides the present one w<sup>ch</sup> I am about to pay him, I shall have a right to give him the *retorte valliante*.

"A blessing upon all turnpike meetings say I, for a turnpike meeting to be held at Ferrybridge next week gives me a legitimate reason for quitting York six days sooner than I should have done. Nay, it goes further, it gives me, as I hope, a cause for *shirking*, or (to use a more fashionable phrase) *cutting* my Lady Jersey, who threaten'd me one of her six o'clock dinners here, in her way from Castle Howard home. However, I have written to her Lord in the manner of Van Butehill, as hoping not to be *dissagreeably circumstanced*. Yet, after all, if he should bring his *alive* wife here next Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, I should much rather entertain Van Butehill's *dead* one, for those three days are devoted by M<sup>rs</sup>. Thorpe to

packing, & scouring the house up for my successor & his Scotch lady.

“*Me Voila donc* on my wheels on Thursday, turning my face directly south, & not pausing a moment at Aston, but taking the direct road to Curzon-street, except, peradventure, making a kind of short curteseing visit to my old *Alma Mater* at Cambridge. Then after seeing poor Sr. Joshua & pleading for my præmium at the Society of Arts for the discovery of yeast, I betake myself to Nuneham, Mrs. Siddons, & what not. These are most pleasant ideas at my fire-side, when it snows out of doors like fury ; but I say to myself, ‘so warm, dry, & comfortable a climate as Nuneham can have none of these *disagremens* about it ; the overflown meadows there will have such a lake-like appearance as to bring Keswick to my mind’s eye, & I can by the powers of imagination easily raise Sr. Stonhouse’s mansion<sup>k</sup> into a Skiddaw, & Abingdon steeple into the eagle’s nest at Borrowdale. But what shall I do for a cascade like Lodor ? No matter, the lock will suffice, for when a man is out of residence nothing can be wrong. He feels, how old soever, as a breaking-up school-boy.’

“I do not expect an answer to this rapsody till I am safely arrived in Town, of w<sup>ch</sup> I shall give you a line of intelligence, w<sup>ch</sup> perhaps is more

<sup>k</sup> Radley House.

than that friend of freedom, the Duke of Orleans, did to that friend of freedom, the Prince of Wales. If in the meantime your Lordship should have taken refuge in Town from boistrous & rainy weather, as he did from boistrous & terrific fish-women, I shall still know where to find you. . . .

"I rest, my dear Lord,

"Very devotedly yours,

"W. MASON."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Curzon-street, 16th November, 1789.

"MY DEAR LORD,—*Me voila actuellment à Londres.* I was relieved from my York captivity six days sooner than I had hoped by being summons'd to a turnpike meeting at Ferrybridge, where our party routed the combined forces of Sr. Walter Vavassour, & carried a point of great public utility. I expect to be rebuked by your Lordship for my presumption in opposing the head of the oldest family in Great Britain, but we live in times when even the House of Bourbon is opposed.

"My present principal business in Town is to obtain not a bishoprick or a deanery, but a præmium from the Society of Arts for a method of making yeast. The business is in a most prosperous train, & I am in hopes of wearing my gold medal pendant to a garter blue ribband at your Lordship's table *à côté* of the divine creature.

"Pray tell me when you expect her, & make my profoundest obeisances acceptable to her Ladyship, &c., &c.

"I am, my dear Lord,

"Most devotedly yours,

"W. MASON."

*"Hartlebury Castle, January 6th, 1790.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I have actually got a fit of the gout, and therefore am too ill at ease to answer your flirts about feasts of reason & flows of soul. However, I must needs say that my present host's flannel stockings & gouty shoes stand me in the stead of either, & fully compensate for all the good breeding I might have experienced elsewhere, where these *commodités* could not have been supplied so quickly.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I should like to know the result of Mr. Kent's journey to Coggs.

"How long I shall stay here my toe must determine. Before it took the lead in my determinations I had written to Lady Vernon, to say I would endeavour to call at Sudbury on my way home, if the family remain'd there. I have not had her answer.

"Happy New Year's respects, compliments, &c.,

be pleased properly & good-breedingly to distribute from your Lordship's

"Faithfully devoted Friend,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, February 9th, 1790.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . I had a long & very entertaining letter from your Lordship transmitted to me from Hartlebury: I mention this because the last letter I writ to you was sent from hence prior to the rec<sup>t</sup> of it, and as that chiefly related to my wish of hearing good news about Mrs. Siddons & Mr. Haggitt, I thank you very sincerely for having complied with those wishes. I have nothing, however, to send you in return that can in any sort entertain you, the greatest occurrence that has happen'd being the present of a dog from my village shoemaker; yet the history of this dog's geniture is worthy of being recorded. You must learn, then, that Monceau (Lady I.'s cast-off favorite) had, two or three years ago, an intrigue with an ordinary terrier. One of the females produced was a mongrel terrier, with very little of the greyhound in its composition. In a quarell w<sup>ch</sup> Monceau had with a stronger dog in the parish in one of his other amours, he dislocated one of his hind legs, w<sup>ch</sup> was never set, so that he afterwards went lame. In process of time, Monceau fell in love with the aforesaid mongrel,

his daughter, & (from too great exertion probably) lamed the fore-leg on the same side, so that he was reduced to the melancholy condition of walking on two ; in short, he was in so deplorable a state, that I permitted that he should have the *coup de grace*. In due time, however, this last incestuous amour produced a litter of whelps, one of w<sup>ch</sup> was so very like the father that the shoemaker preserv'd it for me, and it is so perfect a greyhound that Monceau may truly be said to have stamp't an image of himself before he left the world. I accordingly call it *Phœnix*, because it has clearly arisen from its father's ashes. Tho' your Lordship does not like greyhounds, I am surely persuaded you will own this to be a curiosity. So no more at present from, my dear Lord,

"Your Lordship's much obliged

"& affectionately devoted,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, March 2nd, 1790.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I have examined my Gazette news in the papers till I am tir'd, expecting to make myself ready with my congratulations, w<sup>ch</sup>, whenever the moment comes for writing them, I fear will not quite please you, tho' I mean them to be perfectly well-bred. But as you have often call'd writers of a certain sort God Almighty's



nobility, so I am apt to think statesmen of a certain sort His regality, on w<sup>ch</sup> account I should be more proud to owe M<sup>r</sup>. Pitt an obligation than any monarch in the universe. This opinion of mine you have convinced me in one of your late letters is far from being your Lordship's. If, however, we differ as much as Burke & Sheridan, I beseech you let us not quarrel.

"Alderson is in Town, & means to leave his name at your door. I should be much obliged to my friend Jacob if he could procure me half-a-pint of *Asphaltum*, prepar'd in the manner S<sup>r</sup>. Joshua uses it: it is sold somewhere in S<sup>t</sup>. Martin's-lane. If he calls at S<sup>r</sup>. Joshua's door his servant will tell him where, and if he sends it to Lady Holderness's, Alderson will both pay for it & bring it to Aston.

"I have seen Burke's speech as published by himself, and Lord Stanhope's letter to him. I forgive the said Lord all that he has said against tythes, &c., for the neat way in w<sup>ch</sup> he has introduced the phrase of *Hurling from the throne*, a phrase that I hope will be flung in his teeth over & over again.

"I hope when you favour me with an answer to this you will not fail to mention M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons's state of health. I must leave off at present to answer my brother Jerningham's letter, or rather (as he chuses to call himself in order to keep up his

character of a *beau garçon*) my son's, and I answer him thus immediately to inclose to him a curious letter from Mr. Darnes Barrington, w<sup>ch</sup> I wish your Lordship also to see. Respects to her Ladyship, comp<sup>ts</sup> to Mr. Haggitt, *devoir* to all friends.

"Your Lordship's most devotedly,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, March 14th, 1790.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I reserved my congratulations till the Gazette authorized them, & till I thought all kissing of hands were over; & 'tis well I did, for had I writ instantly, when your Lordship first announc'd the matter, & my letter had reached you at the time of your first function *videlicet*, attending on her Majesty at the Antient Music, it might have interrupted the rapture with w<sup>ch</sup> you undoubtedly heard Jubal's lyre & Miriam's tuneful voice,—a song w<sup>ch</sup>, tho' Lady Harcourt, I know, can sing by *note*, might be more novel, and consequently more enchanting to your Lordship. And now that I sit down to write my congratulations, I am in some doubt whether, as an honest Yorkshireman, I can send them with a safe conscience; for does not the rich blood of the House of Falconbridge fertilize & dignify my native country, blood so rich that it is sometimes obliged to lower & impoverish itself with a mixture of Cheltenham water. I own fairly to

your Lordship, that had I been our Gracious Queen Charlotte, & had weighed that noble Peer's pretensions, my partiality to you would not have gone quite so far as her's has done. No, I would first have commanded you & your antagonist to have appear'd before me at the Ring in Hyde Park, each properly accouter'd as true knights, and there mounted on your steeds, you should thrice have circled the Corso before I determined my choice. Nor do I think that your Lordship would have come off ill from this tryal of horsemanship, for Earl Falconberg, I trust, would have bestrode the most impetuous of all his hunters on this great occasion, & consequently hazarded a tumble; while your Lordship, soberly and gently ambling upon one of your little Isle of Sky ponies, would have kept your saddle and come off victorious. One cannot precisely say this would have been the event, but for my part I am clear that the odds would have been on your side, & that the knowing ones would have been taken in. Except this omission of etiquette in her Majesty, I applaud her choice, & heartily congratulate *Le Maître de Cheval* whom she has chosen.

"I fancy the Duke of Grafton has had the prudence to withhold his motion, as I see nothing of it in the papers; these are not times either to alter Liturgies or give Presbyterians power. I look no farther for quiet times than to the conclusion

of the present reign, & for myself (exclusively of my country) I trust that I look far enough. I wish, however, that *his* Majesty was prohibited by Act of Parliament from riding any other horse than such as *her* Majesty's Master of the Horse should previously try and approve, then, perhaps, one might hope for an end of stag-hunting. . . .

"My dear Lord,

"Yours most cordially,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, April 8th, 1790.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . If I ever aspire to be a well-bred man, the first lesson I shall teach myself will be to appear the most pleas'd when I am the most displeased, and let me tell your Lordship in your ear that as well-bred a man as you think yourself, you have not as yet attained that summit of good breeding. But a Court may mend you, & therefore I will not lecture you more at present on that subject.

"Did your Lordship attend, I ought in good breeding rather to say *assist*, at the laying the first stone of the Opera House? How came my Lord of Buckinghamshire to have that honour? I wonder the Antient Music Lords & the Modern Music Lords did not quarrel about it.

"Your acct of Madame Sheridan's fête moved my indignation vehemently, & still more the liqui-

dation of the debt, surely surely the good people of England will not long bear to be thus insulted. Pray how did my son Jerningham support the character of Mr. Bruce<sup>1</sup>? I have no idea of his success in such matters, tho' you have given me prior proofs of it. You see I am reduc'd to turn my letter into a sort of catechism, in w<sup>ch</sup> I ask questions that your Lordship may give answers. I had better give over, for you can tell me more without my asking than I can gain by asking; so with respects and compliments, &c., I will conclude.

"Your Lordship's devoted,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, June 2nd, 1790.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—Never did any grand *ecuyer* make so lame an excuse as you have done for not honouring me with a visit. I will not, however, say that I am dissatisfied, because I never believed you would take the journey. If, however, in the dreary month of November I should plead the age of sixty-five, or perhaps another visit from my late new visitor, the gout, I trust it will be as good a plea for not coming to Nuneham as the want of just such a sort of vehicle as I might like

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jerningham, the poet, had assumed the character of Mr. Bruce, the famous traveller, of very dubious veracity. He possessed the extraordinary talent of supporting any character thus assumed, so as to remain for many hours at a time undiscovered by his most intimate friends, whom he was in the habit of seeing daily.

best to travel in. Poor Tom Wharton has read me a lesson of mortality, and precisely of that sort w<sup>ch</sup> they who have been much in the habit of living with persons of quality must have learned chiefly to attend to. It has been my constant observation that tho' these can feel sorry for the death of a friend, they never feel for *themselves* but on the death of a personage of their own age and rank; & this in proportion as their respective ranks are equalized in the Peerage books. I have seen mortalities of this'kind operate even hysterically. This being the case, why should not I, as a poet, feel for Tom Wharton just as I guess all old dukes are now feeling for the good Duke of Montagu. Yet, disregardless of my feelings, the wits in York (or rather, as I suspect, that greatest of Scotch wits, Dr. Hunter) have told the opposition wits who support the 'York Herald,' that I, the Precentor of York, am the competitor with Mr. Kemble, of Drury Lane Theatre, for the vacant Laurel.

"Pray, with my kindest compliments, give Mr<sup>s</sup>. Siddons this piece of news, and assure her I am far from being mortified at being placed in competition with her brother, not only because he is her brother, but because I believe him an honest man. Had the 'York Herald' proclaim'd me competitor with the principal patentee of that theatre, I should then have been mortified exceedingly.

Yet I have my doubts when you read her the above sentence, if she will feel it as she ought; for she, like the generality of the world, thinks of genius as they should think solely of Christian charity, that it covers a multitude of sins.

"I am a little curious to know whether the defunct Laureat's Ode will be performed. It certainly must have been written and given to the composer some weeks before his death. There was a mystery, too, concerning the omission of the last New Year's Ode w<sup>ch</sup> I never heard explained, but I am much more curious to know whether the place is to be continued; were I in such a situation that a sentiment of mine could vibrate on my Sovereign's ear, I should make it vibrate strongly for its dissolution. 'Tis a wretched *Gothic* Institution,—pardon, my good Lord, the epithet, Gothic Architecture is out of the question; a single turret in Windsor Castle, or pinnacle on St. George's Chappel is not affected by it, and if you were to be the Governor,—aye, there's the rub, —why not have waited for that? but perhaps you may arrive at that supreme height of all your wishes; for my part, could I forward this promotion, I would engage myself to do the work of the Laureat *gratis*, and I would write my Odes in the true Ciberian form, that they might be married to immortal Handelian music. Neither Whitehead nor Wharton knew how to write as they



should on such occasions, and I appeal to all the gentlemen of the Royal Chappel to corroborate my sentiment.

“Whether this will find your Lordship in Westminster Abbey, or dressing for the birthday, I am uncertain. However, it may be pocketted for the perusal of a leisure hour when these pleasurable avocations are finished. Poor Pacciarotti! Dixon has told me how he is flouted, but he is right served. I never knew a nightingale in my life that chose to sing at the top of an oak or an elm at the time when it was filled with crow nests. As your Lordship never visits the country in the vernal season, I fear you will not have an adequate idea of my allusion, nor Lady Harcourt neither, to whom I present my best respects.

“Believe me, my dear Lord,

“Yours very devotedly,

“W. MASON.

“Compliments to Mr. Haggitt.”

*“York, October 17th, 1790.*

“MY DEAR LORD,—The honour of Lady Harcourt’s letter, w<sup>ch</sup> I rec<sup>d</sup> this morning, shall have its effect, & rouse me to pay my epistolary debts, & first the long one w<sup>ch</sup> I owe to your Lordship; but I must plead in my own apology, that if you could have any conception of the dullest of all lives w<sup>ch</sup> I lead here, you would not wonder to

find me the dispirited thing I am, and how great an effort it requires to write anything from hence that can be likely to amuse any of my correspondents. Besides this, I feel old age coming upon me with hasty strides, & tho' it has not (as I think) so far depressed my imagination but that I can imitate what I formerly *was*, & seem to be as capricious & whimsical as ever (two characteristic qualities w<sup>ch</sup>, at first, I flatter myself put me into your Lordship's good graces), yet it is now mere imitation, & requires, as I said before, an effort too strong for the general run of my spirits.

“ This, therefore, is the real cause of my silence, not only to you, but to all my other good friends, when I have not any immediate topic, either of business or necessary information to write about. Public matters also, both at home & in France, afford no object either of speculation or conjecture to eke out a letter. One cannot here in the country even put quæres about war and peace, or ask how it is likely the revolution in France will end, to our friends in the great world ; for the laudable secrecy of the Minister, & the Camælion changes in the National Assembly, assure one that nobody is able to give more than a conjectural answer on either of these topics ; I have therefore ventured very lately to buy some stock, even without consulting Stonhewer, who was always my great director in such important matters.

"I have seen your Lordship's name so frequently among the *Levéé* Earls that I take for granted you have not been very stationary at Nuneham during the recess, and I am glad of it, because, peradventure, you may have learned by practise that posting backwards & forwards is a more bearable calamity than you have hitherto thought it; not that I expect on a future year to benefit by it, & have the honour of a visit from you at Aston, because I imagine tho' you may have eat, you have never slept at an inn, and the purgatory of that, I take for granted, will ever deter you from taking so long a journey. . . .

"Your Lordship's

"truely devoted,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, Feb. 28th, 1791.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I am resolv'd that a third month shall not end before I beg pardon for my unusually long silence, a silence w<sup>ch</sup> first had its origin from not well knowing how to answer the greatest part of your last letter, w<sup>ch</sup> you so kindly wrote to set my heart at ease about your suppos'd illness, concerning w<sup>ch</sup> I had sent more, I hope, than *obliging enquirys*. But when I found it was all about a supposed mad dog, I knew not how to treat the subject with proper gravity, because, as you know, I am a sort of *esprit fort* with respect

to canine madness. I was afraid I might say something disrespectful to Dr. James, of whose memory I believe your Lordship has as much reverence as Edmund Burke, I presume, has of Ignatius Loyala's. I thought it best, therefore, to let two or three moons come to their changes before I congratulate you on this matter, w<sup>ch</sup> I now do, & with it beg leave to conclude my apology.

"In return for my congratulations I expect, at your Lordship's full leisure, to be congratulated on my part for having had the good fortune not to visit the Metropolis this winter, w<sup>ch</sup>, if I had done, I should have found it, perhaps, somewhat difficult to avoid being the improver of Frogmore. I find myself much more agreeably employ'd at my own parsonage, in burlesquing your Lordship's flower-garden at Nuneham, & making a thing unique in its kind, w<sup>ch</sup>, when finished, I shall call a *Jardin Potager Ornè*. But a wretched bed of asparagus, & an early crop of beans & peas, prevent me from compleating my plan till the next autumn. Our old friend Horace, as Mrs. Harcourt's father<sup>m</sup> used to call him, says

'Omne tulit Punctum qui miscuit *utile Dulci*,'

& I hope to do this as well as Jean Jaques Julie, if my brick walls will suffer me.

<sup>m</sup> Dr. Danby.

“I grow every day a greater adept in that species of philosophy w<sup>ch</sup> best becomes a toothless old man. I always resolv’d that so soon as I had any decided symptom of old age more than that of mere gray hairs, I would wean myself from the world, & depend on self alone for all my amusements & gratifications. God be thanked that it is not a defect of eyes or of ears, but of teeth only that I suffer, & this, tho’ it admonishes me to avoid the tables of the great & the *bon ton*, & consequently to keep out of London, does not make me quarrel with my existence, or depress my spirits, and I now find myself arrived at such a pitch of solitary perfection, that I am regardless about even the squabbles of the two Opera Houses; and, as to political & literary matters, I am so careless that I have not redde either a syllable of Burke’s book (save only his insanity about the Q. of F.) nor of any of his numerous answerers; nay, I almost think I could avoid opening that of Sir Brooke Boothby if it was laid on my table.

“The acc<sup>t</sup> w<sup>ch</sup> you gave me of M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons’ having engaged to act twice a-week made me resolve not to make any enquirys after her, knowing that the bad account I should certainly have of her would come but too soon to the public prints. I find, however, she has acted once, & but once, & if she did this merely to refute the almost general rumour that her disease was in the brain, I can

forgive her. Don't, however, tell me anything about her, for it will break in upon my philosophical system, w<sup>ch</sup> teaches me that whatever or whosoever I like best I should enquire after the least.

"Lay me at the feet of her Ladyship, & pray tell Miss Fauquier that the reason I do not write to her is, lest she should answer me, & tell me how divinely Pacciarotti fills the dome of the Pantheon. I laid the said Signor asside when I was last in Town, for preferring Lady Mary Duncombe's company to that of any. My dear Lord,

"Your Lordship's

"*Devouvé,*

"W. MASON.

"I have been as long in debt to Stonhewer as your Lordship, & this upon system; I cannot help asking, tho' it breaks in upon the said system, whether he or Lord Cardigan is most in the good graces of that light gossimer the Theodore?"

"*York, August 30th, 1791.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—I am much surprised that your Lordship should imagine that I meant my last as a farewell letter. You may remember that it contained a request to you for a congratulatory epistle, w<sup>ch</sup> it certainly would not have done had I wished to drop a correspondence w<sup>ch</sup> has for many years been so very honourable & entertaining to myself. It is true that I told you I was

weaning myself from Town & the polite circles of w<sup>ch</sup> it was composed, & this on account of certain symptoms of old age, w<sup>ch</sup> I thought, & still think, I ought to do, nay, w<sup>ch</sup> I think I have now compleatly atchieved. During this interval of philosophical self-regimen, it was necessary I should wish not to be too much amused even by epistolary correspondence, on w<sup>ch</sup> occasion I forbore to give my friends immediate answers to such letters as contain'd no immediate business, as Stonhewer, Palgrave, &c., &c., can testify, & who will perhaps mix reproof of me with their testimonial ; but now I have habituated myself so much to solitude and to such a small number of my equals, who are no better bred than myself, that I flatter myself I shall pass the remainder of my life, tho' divested of any very pleasurable society, with complacency, peace, & self-satisfaction. As a proof that this change in my mode of living is attended with no chagrin, or dislike of those amusements w<sup>ch</sup> I can gratify in solitude itself, I inclose you a trifle of w<sup>ch</sup> I have printed a very few copies, & w<sup>ch</sup> I wish your Lordship to consider as a manuscript. I flatter myself that when you read it (tho', perhaps, you may think the notes old-fashionedly pedantic) you will think the verses inserted in the text no unhappy imitation of Prior's easy manner.

"I am glad to find that M<sup>r</sup>. Haggitt has for the



vehicle of his promotion so well-bred a bishop as my Lord of Durham, yet I wish that so ill-bred a minister, as it seems Mr. Pitt is, had more favour in your Lordship's eyes than he seems at present to have from your account of him. Believe me, my good Lord, the salvation of this country, under heaven, rests upon his single shoulders, or rather head-piece; if, therefore, he chuses to relax himself with vulgar private parties, & mere college wit, I pray you to forgive him. Earl Fitz-William & Charles Fox, tho' last week drawn by men into this exulting city, will, I fear me, make small amends for his loss, if your regal friend should chuse to discard him for want of due *politesse*. But it seems Burke is now fawning himself into his favour. I trembled when I read in the papers that they lately chatted together on the promenade at Windsor so very pleasantly, and I think with reason, for the blasphemer who said the Almighty had hurl'd him from his throne might, perhaps, have hurl'd him down the terrace. I wish Frogmore was finished, that when his Majesty chuses such a companion he might walk with more safety. Having mention'd this I call again for your congratulations, w<sup>ch</sup> your last favour by no means convey'd.

“The want of a post-chaise, & the attendance at the abbey, are two such excellent & irrefragable reasons for your Lordship's not honouring me

with a visit these last two years, that I doubt not but you will find one still more cogent & convincing for not doing it the next. Nothing, I am convinced, but the pleasure of seeing Mr. Haggitt installed at Durham will prompt you to make Aston your half-way house, w<sup>ch</sup> that it may soon be (as we say here at the end of a sermon) the bishop in his infinite benignity grant.

“At your Lordship’s next visit at *Rosehill*<sup>a</sup> (I am afraid a certain person will pull caps with her for giving her mansion so *bucolique* a name) pray make my respects to M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons. I saw her brother play Hamlet here in a manner that pleased me highly, but as he did not make me a visit, and as, on acc<sup>t</sup> of my present system, I could not wait upon him, I was prevented from telling him so personally. I hope Lady Harcourt will look upon this as a joint answer both to hers & your Lordship’s kind letter, & that I am mutually your Lordship’s & her Ladyship’s

“Truely devoted Servant,

“W. MASON.”

“*York, November 20th, 1791.*

“MY DEAR LORD,—You will have heard from Harrowgate that I paid my *devoirs* to my thea-

<sup>a</sup> During Dr. Haggitt’s absence at his golden stall in Durham M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons rented the parsonage at Nuneham, and passed part of several summers there: the name of Rose-hill was of her giving, but was not retained after she quitted it.

trical empress in due time, & returned to my captivity the same evening. To enable me to do this I found it necessary to attend early prayers at seven in the morning, & to breakfast at Green-Hamerton, where, as I remember, your Lordship very unnecessarily stopt to dine, & was *exudé* with your bad entertainment.

"I never saw Mrs. S. look better, & as her complaint is now deemed the worms, I have great hopes that Harrowgate waters may remove it, tho' they fail'd to cure the poison convey'd into your Lordship's forehead by the lining of a French *Chapeau, ou Bonnet de Voyage*.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have determin'd to sustain another residence that I may be compleatly at liberty the next summer. I could not help smiling at your declaration that no symptoms of age should determine you 'to shut yourself up in the country,' you, whose *system* thro' youth has been to do so every summer, & most part of the winter (for I am not fashionable enough to determine the commencement of winter at the opening of a new sessions). But admit you have departed from your system, may not I be permitted to take it up, who have so often had the honour to use your cast snuff-boxes? If your Lordship confines your excursions to the environs of Nuneham, or, at the furthest, to Windsor, are not the three Ridings of this gigantic county space

enough for a sexagenarian like myself to range in ? But my system (if you will have it so) restrains me only from visiting London, when it is call'd London ; when it goes into the country I have no objection to visit its abandoned streets, because it is civil enough to me to leave its arts behind it.

“With respect to the political paragraph in your last favour, I have only to reply in the words of either Bob or Buck at Hanover : ‘Some say their Lord’s Prayer & some their Creed—for my part I say nothing.’ A minister, if he has really done the two things he has done, with no better motives than your Lordship assigns, can never be a *truely great minister*.

“Wherever Stonhewer is, be it north, be it south, some nodder is sure to start up & detain him. He has put off calling upon me in his return from Durham so long that I suppose his visit will be, according to the Aristotelic unity of time, confin’d to the exact duration of twenty-four hours.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Poor Mrs. Ann Morritt, who is every day a more distressing object, has yet had strength enough to recover from a violent attack of colic, fever, &c., & may, from present appearance, exist, with all her mental faculties perfect, months if not years longer ; she & the sisters (who merit all that can be said for their affectionate attendance

on her) return their best respects to her Ladyship & yourself, to w<sup>ch</sup> I join my own.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Believe me, my dear Lord, that it is a principal part of *my system* to be

"Very cordially yours,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, Feb. 20th, 1792.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . I am very glad to find that M<sup>r</sup>. Haggitt's complaint, w<sup>ch</sup> you deemed incurable, was so soon cured, & therefore I am not without hopes that your Lordship & himself will take Aston on your way to Durham when you deliver him up to his new patron. I remember, when first I went from Cambridge into Lord Holderness's family, Gray, who went up to Town in the same stage-coach, told people in London 'that he was come up to put Mason an apprentice to a Secretary of State.' I hope M<sup>r</sup>. Haggitt's apprenticeship to a bishop will teach him as little ecclesiastical craft as I learned of political; and yet if he has not more of both than I ever gained, he will be no great gainer on the upshot. I am rejoiced to find that M<sup>rs</sup>. Siddons is able again to appear upon the stage, but have enough of the courtier left in me, when writing to your Lordship, to impute anything of her better health to Harrow-

gate water. All Spas whatever, w<sup>ch</sup> cannot cure a sore forehead excoriated by the verdigris poison of a French *Chapeau de Voyage*, I hold to be mere chips in porridge.

“I glory in my wine-merchant’s patriotic scorn of titles and supporters ; I try’d all I could, when Palgrave was with me at York, to make him send his chaise to the coach painters to blot out his mantle (w<sup>ch</sup> we all know he had never any right to encircle his quartering withal), but to no purpose, and quoted his Lordship’s example (I beg his pardon for calling him so) in vain. When he comes to Town pray turn him over to the Margravine, & let her Serene Highness make him her Chaplain. That your Lordship has taken to painting again gives me great satisfaction ; ‘*to be employ’d is to be happy*,’ said Gray, and if he had never said anything else either in prose or even in verse, he would have deserved the esteem of all posterity. My present happiness arises only from employing others, & I have, during the last ten months, instructed a poor disciple (only just now turned of thirteen) in my system of four colours, so that when he was at York with me he copied a landscape of Poussin’s most wonderfully, and I have no doubt but in a very little time he will excell Charles in ev’ry species of copying ; how much his genius will go farther I cannot yet say, but he has so much docility, patience, & perseverance, that I

hope great things from him when his faculties are more develloped . . . .

“My dear Lord,

“Yours very devotedly & sincerely,

“W. MASON.

“I was requested some time ago to ask your Lordship how Oxford & its Shire were affected towards a petition against the Slave Trade, but as I previously knew what Christ Church and its leaders thought on that subject I forbore to put the question. For myself, I have done both at York & in this neighbourhood what conscience dictated to do. But the subject is now changed from a matter of just & humane feeling to a matter of false & political reasoning, so I have little hope of success, however numerous the petitions may prove. . . .”

“*Aston, July 12th, 1792.*

“MY DEAR LORD . . . .—You will not, I fancy, be satisfied with a letter w<sup>ch</sup> has hitherto said nothing, unless I add to it either some news or some egotisms. Of the former I can give you nothing from so sequester’d a station, and of the latter nothing worth reading, except that tho’ I have relinquished the world it does not seem inclined to have relinquished me. Mr. Repton °, the great

° Mr. Mason, upon his becoming acquainted with Mr. Repton and his works, altered his opinion with respect to the abilities of that artist, to which he afterwards did ample justice.



landscape gardiner, who has the Duke of Portland & Earl Fitzwilliam in his clutches, and who I should think

‘Need no rod but Repton *without* rule,’ writes me word that he & I ought to be acquainted, and gives this best of all reasons for it, ‘that both Miss Steward and Mr. Hayley say we ought.’ Mr. Penn, who is putting up a cenotaph at Stoke to the memory of Mr. Gray, writes to consult me about it, & he, too, is in the hands of Mr. Repton; he sends me, too, a tragedy of his own, formed on the Greek model, with chorusses, &c., &c. Mr. Malons also, as executor to poor Sr. Joshua, is become my correspondent; he, like your Lordship & some other great antiquarys, opines that my legacy is spurious. Such a host of new correspondents, you will easily believe, keep me rather in hot water. However, I fight them off as well as I can, but with so much civility, not to say *politesse*, that I verily believe were I to come again into the world, it would find me, from this epistolary practice, almost as urbane & as little like a plain country parson as when I frequented operas and sup’t with old Lord Delawarr and my Lady Ciss. Bless my heart! while I am writing this I forget that I have lost all my teeth. Sup now with Lady Ciss! no! no! such happiness must never again be my lot. But perhaps Lady Ciss has by this time lost

all her teeth, & if so, we might mumble together upon a par ; true, but will she take her false teeth out on the occasion ? must not I get a new mouth-piece by way of qualification ? Better rest contented as I am, amongst my honest parishioners, who think me the more venerable for these & other defects.

“I had the pleasure to read in the last ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ a new life of myself, drawn up with much conciseness, & not, as I suppose, at all in Mr. Boswell’s manner. It charges me with no faults save too great a tendency to politics, w<sup>ch</sup> for the future I am resolved to avoid ; and it approves of my present mode of life, w<sup>ch</sup>, therefore, I am resolv’d to continue. Admire, my Lord, my docility, and believe me to be (with my best respects to Lady Harcourt, & compliments to M<sup>r</sup>. Haggitt)

“Your Lordship’s

“very sincere Friend

“& obliged Servant,

“W. MASON.”

“*Aston, October 3rd, 1792.*

“MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Such a summer surely never was before. Our roads are almost impassible, as *my* uncle, Admiral Phil, experienced this morning, who did me the honour to breakfast here in his way to Town from visiting his nephew at

Swinton, & the new Earl of Effingham in my neighbourhood. He laments much that his nephew is a Demagogue, & hardly thinks that his niece, when she comes from Brussels, will convert him ; but I, who am neither a Demagogue nor an Aristocrat, & who look no further for the existence of this country as a nation (better worth being call'd so than France) than the limits of the present reign (God send its limits may be at least commensurate with my life & your Lordship's), am not very solicitous about such matters. I wish, however, that the good General & his helpmate were safely returned, & this the Admiral thinks they are. Let me, however, boast that not to be a demagogue in my present situation is in me no small degree of merit, considering that by the aid of an aristocrat, in the person of Lord Fitzwilliam, the Scotch lunatic doctor at York has compleatly triumph'd over me, & frustrated all my exertions for the Yorkshire poor in that sad predicament. But to give your Lordship a detail of this business would be a *bore*, therefore I only announce the fact. . . . .

“My dear Lord,

“Your most sincerely attached

“Servant,

“W. MASON.”

"*Aston, Nov. 24th, 1792.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . Your Lordship knows my aversion to looking at maps, but from the information of my curate, who, at my request, has taken that disagreeable office upon himself, it seems as if my way from Paddington lay thro' Ailsbury. If so, I shall certainly pay my *devoirs* to your sister<sup>p</sup>, and get her spouse, Sr. William, to settle my political conscience. I hate the French, I detest the Germans, therefore if I could get Sr. William to convince me that all the carnage they have made of late was on account of the Jews it would greatly content me, for that neither Demagogues nor Harry Scrotts (as my neighbours the Sheffield cutlers call the latter) will ultimately be gainers by it I am perfectly convinc'd.

"I hope Mr<sup>s</sup>. Siddons will have left Nuncham before I arrive, for I am out of all charity with her for not having heard or seen anything of her when she was within ten miles of me.

"My best *devoirs* attend all the family, *au revoir*.

"Your Lordship's

"*devouè*,

"W. MASON."

"*Aston, Aug. 10th, 1793.*

"I NEVER, my dear Lord, in my correspondence, either with Peer or Plebeian, observed any other

<sup>p</sup> Lady Elizabeth Lee, at Hartwell.

etiquette than that of writing when I had something to write about, and it has so happen'd that since I left Town I have had nothing to write about to anybody, except now & then a trifling commission, w<sup>ch</sup> *bienseance* prevented me from troubling your Lordship with. Besides this, I had heard that much of your time in this interval was taken up in your attentions at Windsor, &, therefore, knowing how much the Gothicisms of that superb Castle, to say nothing of its royal inmates, had power to entertain you, I thought that a letter from me, such as in my rustication I was able to write from my straw hut, where I have spent most of my hours in the late fine weather, would add little to your amusement. I was led to think also from the newspaper, that after the birthday your French cousins had become your visitants at Nuneham.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Now that Valenciennes is fallen to the conquering arms of our Commander-in-chief, I am in hopes the British battalions will be in less danger than I fear they have been in the former part of the campaign, & I hope that your excellent brother's cool courage & military experience may allay the rash ardor, & make amends for the no experience of —. But I check myself for fear of talking treason, a mode of talking w<sup>ch</sup> is now more than ever in vogue among my neighbours at

Sheffield, & whose proceedings by meetings, exercising, seditious, hand-bills, &c., &c., are in my opinion very alarming. Your Lordship may depend upon it, that what I said when I was with you on the topic of the proclamation & addresses is very true, 'the snake is only scotched, not killed.' If the war continues (& yet how can it cease?) the winter will not pass over without some insurrection. I hope, however, it will not be so formidable as to do more than frighten your new Oxford Chancellor & my neighbouring Earl into a little political prudence, & make them repent of their profligacy in pensioning Charles Fox.

"I am glad to hear that your Lordship continues to amuse yourself with painting, for my part I have laid it aside almost entirely, I find my hand too unsteady to do anything but sketch. . . .

"Your very devoted

"& affectionate Servant,

"W. MASON."

*"Aston, April 17th, 1794.*

"MY DEAR LORD,— . . . . I begin to think myself too near to Sheffield, where sedition seems to be at a greater height than ever, & where the principal inhabitants & the Justices of the Peace are too much intimidated to take any active step to quell it. There is a man who calls himself York, tho' I believe his real name is Redhead, who

harangues thousands of the Sheffield journeymen cutlers in a field adjoining the town ; distributes pamphlets of the most inflammatory kind ; puts up hand-bills to dissuade all young men from enlisting into the army, &c., &c. ; it is said that on Monday next they mean to meet again & publicly plant the tree of liberty. The soldiery quartered there are at present but few, tho' I hear more are sent for, yet, unless authorised by the civil magistrate, they can do nothing. In short, I own myself somewhat frighten'd, though not enough so to run like your *vous-dissant* French cousin<sup>9</sup>, & go elsewhere to plague other people. If I have by the above expression been ungrammatical, I glory in having broken their Priscian's head upon this occasion, with its nasal twang.

"Pardon me, my good Lord, if I can as little assent to your being an Antigallican as to your being a Hottentot. 'Tis time you paint the real character of that coxcomb nation with the hand of a master ; yet till I see your Lordship lay aside every silly fashion that you have imbibed from them, I cannot absolutely give you credit ; that you may become a thorough proselyte, a complete John, like myself, I wish, & even pray, heartily ; in the meantime, I sincerely, & from my heart, pity

<sup>9</sup> The Duc de Harcourt, whom Lord Harcourt entertained, and subsequently pensioned, during his exile from France under the republic.



you that you are condemned, without any apparent prospect of speedy respite, to endure such society.

“At present, however, I hope you enjoy what you have seldom had an opportunity of enjoying, a Nuneham spring. . . .

“Your Lordship’s most cordially,

“W. MASON.

“Let me beg your Lordship to wrap up your next letter w<sup>ch</sup> you honour me with in a decent English parallelogram mode, & not in that awkward French square, w<sup>ch</sup>, however French, is the very way w<sup>ch</sup> English tradesmen have follow’d time immemorial.”



MEMOIR OF  
WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.



## Memoir of William Whitehead.

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD was born at Cambridge, in 1715; he was the second son of a baker, who sent him to a small school in Cambridge, and died whilst his son was still a child. Lord Montford took compassion upon the destitute condition in which his family was left, and gave young Whitehead a nomination to Winchester School.

Dr. Balguy gives the following account of him during his school-days :—

“He was always of a delicate turn, and, though obliged to go to the hills with other boys, spent his time there in reading either plays or poetry; he was also particularly fond of the *Atlantis*, and all other books of private history or character. He very early exhibited his taste for poetry; for while other boys were contented with shewing up twelve or fourteen lines he would fill half a sheet, but always with English verse. This Dr. Burton, the master, at first discouraged; but after some time he was so much charmed that he spoke of

them with rapture. When he was sixteen he wrote a whole comedy. In the winter of the year 1732 he is said to have acted a female part in the 'Andria,' under Dr. Burton's direction. Of this there are some doubts, but it is certain that he acted Marcia, in the tragedy of Cato, with much applause. In the year 1733 the Earl of Peterborough, having Mr. Pope at his house near Southampton, carried him to Winchester to shew him the college, school, &c. The Earl gave ten guineas to be disposed of in prizes amongst the boys, and Mr. Pope set them a subject to write upon, viz. *Peterborough*. Prizes of a guinea each were given to six of the boys, of whom Whitehead was one. The remaining sum was laid out for other boys in subscriptions to Piece's Horace, then about to be published. He never excelled in writing epigrams, nor did he make any considerable figure in Latin verse, though he understood the classics very well, and had a good memory. He was, however, employed to translate into Latin the first epistle of the 'Essay on Man,' and the translation is still extant in his own hand. Dobson's success in translating Prior's 'Solomon' had put this project into Mr. Pope's head, and he set various persons to work upon it.

"Whitehead's school friendships were usually contracted either with noblemen or gentlemen of large fortune, such as Lord Drumlanrig, Sir Charles

Douglas, Sir Robert Burdett, Mr. Tryon, and Mr. Mundy of Leicestershire. The choice of those persons was imputed by some of his school-fellows to vanity, by others to prudence; but might it not be owing to his delicacy, as this would make him easily disgusted with the coarser manners of ordinary boys? He was school-tutor to Mr. Wollop, afterwards Lord Lymington, son to the late Earl of Portsmouth, and father to the present Earl. He enjoyed, for some little time, a lucrative place in the college, that of preposter of the hall. At the election in September, 1735, he was treated with singular injustice; for, through the force of superior interest, he was placed so low on the roll that it was scarce possible for him to succeed to New College. Being now superannuated, he left Winchester of course, deriving no other advantage from the college than a good education: this, however, he had ingenuity enough to acknowledge with gratitude, in a poem prefixed to the second edition, in Dr. Lowth's 'Life of William of Wickham.'"

After his disappointment in respect to New College he returned to Cambridge, and obtained a scholarship at Clare, of the weekly value of four shillings. During his stay at the University he published several



minor poems, but his first production of any note was one entitled "The danger of writing in Verse;" this obtained him some repute, but it was followed shortly by the tale of "Atys and Adrastus," which was received with still more favour. The "Essay on Ridicule" was published in 1743, and was reckoned one of his best pieces. At this period of his life his chief object in all his work was to obtain a living for himself, and to avoid as much as possible drawing upon his mother's slender means. He took his degree in 1739, and in 1742 was elected a fellow of his college. The intention which he had of taking orders was interrupted by an offer which was made to him of becoming tutor to the son of the Earl of Jersey. This offer was accepted, and a youth of the name of Stephens was associated with the son of his patron as a companion pupil. Henceforth his chief place of residence was at Lord Jersey's, and he had ample leisure for his literary pursuits.

In 1750 he produced "The Roman Fa-

ther," a tragedy which was represented at Drury-lane Theatre. It retained its place on the stage with considerable favour for a lengthened period. The "Hymn to the Nymph of the Bristol Spring" may be given as a favourable specimen of our poet's blank verse. In 1751 the "Ode to Friendship" was given to the world: Gray disapproved of the sentiments the poem contained, and said that the stanzas should rather have been called "A Satire on Friendship;" the bad tendency they possessed he declared to be the more exceptionable, because they were so poetically and finely expressed. The objection taken by Gray referred to Whitehead's assertion that the decay of friendship may be mutual, and from causes for which neither party is seriously to blame.

In 1754 the tragedy of "Creusa" was published, and met with a moderate success. At this date Whitehead accepted an engagement to go to Leipsic in charge of the sons of Lord Jersey and Lord Harcourt, with the purpose of attending the lectures of Professor

Mascon in that city. Leaving England in June, they passed the summer at Rheims, to prosecute the study of the French language. Seven months were then spent at Leipsic, but the object of the visit was missed, as the professor had passed into a state of dotage. In the spring, the German courts, Vienna, and Italy, were visited; and the homeward voyage carried the party across the Alps, and through Germany, Switzerland, and Holland. France was inaccessible owing to the war, and the travellers landed at Harwich in September, 1756.

During his absence abroad Whitehead had been presented with the patent offices of Secretary and Registrar of the Bath. He had not been idle during this period, and elegies and odes were inspired by the classical air of the regions he visited. Two years after his return he was appointed Poet Laureat, a place which had been successively offered to Mason and Gray. Whitehead now occupied the position of confidential companion to Lord Jersey, whose son was

no longer in leading-strings; and he was an equally acceptable guest at Nuneham and at Harcourt House.

In 1762 he wrote a comedy called "The School for Lovers," which was acted at Drury-lane, and met with success. "The Charge to the Poets" was his next publication, a work of considerable merit. At this time Churchill selected Whitehead as one of the chief objects of his animosity; his attacks were treated with disdainful silence, but, such was the power of Churchill's sarcasms, that Garrick made it a condition with Whitehead that the "Trip to Scotland," a farce composed by him in 1770, should be produced anonymously. The piece had a great run, and its author was never suspected. In 1774 Whitehead collected and published his plays and poems in one volume. In 1776 "Variety, a tale for Married People," appeared, and it was followed in 1777 by "The Goat's Beard," which was his last publication. In April, 1785, he was attacked by a severe cold, but his usual pursuits were

not interrupted. On the 13th April he was visited by Lord Harcourt, and on the following day finding himself disinclined to eat his dinner, he bade his servant conduct him to his bed, and expired on his way to it. He was in his seventieth year: he was buried in the chapel in South Audley-street. His memoirs were published by Mr. Mason in 1788.

Although Whitehead might, perhaps, be denied a place in the first class of English poets, yet he could justly claim the possession of a pure classical taste, as well as of much genuine humour.

## Letters.

*“Hotwell, Bristol, Aug. 1st, 1757.*

“MY LORD,—I have been so much a Rambler this summer that it was with some difficulty your Lordship’s very obliging letter found me at last. I am at present at Bristol, but shall leave it in a few days to attend the family<sup>a</sup> to Longleat, & afterwards to Middleton, where I shall hope to rest a little from my pleasurable fatigues. The weather has been so extremely fine that one might almost imagine the climates we enjoyed last year had followed us into England.

“Derbyshire & Yorkshire were in perfect beauty. In the latter I saw Studley, where Nature has been bountiful to the last degree. In some parts she is happily corrected by Mr. Aislabie; in others I could wish he had left her to herself: she would never have turned a river out of its natural course to form a round basin & two half-moons of water; nor would she have clipped her elms into Gothic windows. The scenes about Bristol I find as excellent as ever. The mountains, indeed, lose something of their magnitude now I have passed the Alps; nor has the water quite so cerulean a cast as the lake of Geneva; it is, however, very like

<sup>a</sup> Lord Jersey’s family.

the golden Tiber, which you know is some comfort to a classical traveller.

“I saw much less of Mason in my travels than I wished to have done, tho’ I saw him several times. He left off fires one of the hot days, in pure complaisance, that Mr. & Mrs. Wright & myself might dine with him at Aston. The dramatic part of ‘Caractacus’ is finished, & he has begun the ‘Odes.’ He is by much the finest preacher in the whole country, & villages & towns flock to hear him. He has a favorite blacksmith whom he has taught to sing Marcello’s Psalms like an angel, & I suppose, to beat time with his hammer. I send your Lordship this news in return for your history of the Pritchards, to whom you have partially promised much more pleasure than they will ever receive from my plays when they are finished ; at present the poor things are in a miserable condition indeed, Middleton is their only chance. I have lately received a letter from Professor Mascon, an extract from which I must send you, as it regards your Lordship as much as Lord Villiers or myself :—

“‘I applaudis fort aux belles maximes que vous avez pris occasion de recommander a my lord Villiers et a my lord Newnham au milieu des ruines de l’ancienne Rome. Je me tiens fort assuré, qu’ils rempliront toujours les esperances que le public peut fonder justement sur de si bons carac-



teres ; on a fait un bel article de ces Poesies dans nôtre Gazette literaire, pour honorer la memoire de ces deux Seigneurs, dans l'université qu'ils ont honoré par leur presence.'

"He likewise desires his '*tres humbles respêts*' to your Lordship, but does not mention one single word of politics or the King of Prussia, nor make the least enquiry after the Savoy or crutched Friars. Mons<sup>r</sup>. Zigenkagen is, I presume, well, by his saying nothing to the contrary. . . .

"I am, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obliged

"& most obedient humble Servant,

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, June 20th, 1758.*

"MY LORD,—I have many thanks to return your Lordship for your very obliging letter & invitation to Newnham. It was not possible to comply with the latter, &, as the weather has turned out, perhaps it is better it was posponed 'till our return from Bristol. I long to examine every part of it in the minutest manner, even to its most concealed beauties, what such a divine as Jeremy Taylor would call its virgin & unripe retirements.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I finished sitting at Wilson's before I came out of town, & the picture seems to me very easy,

& amazingly like. He is pleased with it himself, & intends to take great pains in the colouring, &c. He is quite confident that you will like it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Why is not a nightingale at Cockthorp as musical as in the Cascinos at Florence? Fie upon you, my Lord, domestic happiness is the only happiness worth having. The scandal part I know you are vastly averse to, & so is Miss West.

"*I am quite ashamed* to have gone on thus far without congratulating your Lordship upon the public news. We have had a letter from Stephens, on a scrap of glazed peach paper, dated from the English camp at Chateau Richieu en Bretagne. They had just received orders to re-embark when he wrote. The office-wing at Middleton is very near covered in; the kitchen has a glorious fire in it, & has been made use of the whole time we have been here.

"W. WHITEHEAD."

"*Bristol, July 12th, 1758.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . You please me excessively when you talk of your satisfaction at home : pursue it, & enjoy it ; an every-day happiness is the thing ; your occasional holydays you may take into the bargain. You are very French & very fine with regard to my picture, so fine that that part of your

letter is unanswerable, & I can only say I am much obliged for your sentiments. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*“Bristol, July 24th, 1758.*

“MY LORD,— . . . I am glad you have so fine an entertainment at Althorpe as the pictures you speak of. Mr. Hamilton, who is here, confirms your account of them. He talks highly, too, of General Guise’s opinion of your Lordship’s taste, but do not let it flatter you into being an absolute *virtuoso*. As an amusement it is excellent, but there are beauties of a still higher relish in morals & in actions. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*“Middleton Park, Aug. 29th, 1758.*

“MY LORD,— . . . All I have to say in defence of my behaviour with regard to Aurelia is this: I cannot frame the story to my mind, so as to bring in the situations properly. Distress brought in without previous & natural leadings can affect nobody but those who are moved by white satin & black velvet. When I read it to your Lordship I could give hints of what I intended, & tell a thousand particulars in plain prose which poetry will hardly admit of. I could talk like boys of ‘long before the beginning of this play,’ &c., & of what passed in the green-room; but when all is

to be represented on the stage it becomes a different affair, & you would not like to receive your information from a conversation between M<sup>rs</sup>. Bennet & M<sup>r</sup>. Mozeen, tho' it should even be enlivened towards the end with a little dash of Miss Bradshaw or M<sup>r</sup>. Rastor. Think of these things, my Lord, & you will excuse my niceness. However, I will promise you to take it up when I go to Town again, & try whether I can new model it. In the meantime I have other pursuits, not to mention Birthday and New Year's odes, one of which I sent this morning to the Duke of Devonshire, and shall send it to D<sup>r</sup>. Boyce in about a fortnight, to be recitativèd, aired, & chorussed. I begin to be heartily tired of 'selling myself for vanity to rhyming & the devil,' & find an affection for prose authors grow upon me mightily.

"Do you hear anything of Mason? it begins to be time that he should answer my last letter. I am in doubt whether he may not by this time be got to Sion-hill; at Aston he is a good correspondent. If your Lordship knows where he is I shall be glad of the information. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Sept. 9th, 1758.*

"MY LORD,— . . . Lord and Lady Hyde are expected here to-morrow. It is some time ago since I visited Persfield & Abbey Tintern, but

I remember being excessively struck with them. They are beauties which partake strongly of the wonderful, and leave poor art at a great distance : to talk in your own way, they are strokes of Shakespear.

"You talk of seeing my ode when it returns from the Lord Chamberlain, without considering that that is the 'Bourn from whence no poetry returns,' 'till it appears the ghost of itself mangled in a newspaper. Your Lordship shall see it, however, when I have the honor of seeing you, tho' it principally consists of what you detest, German history. My New Year's Ode will probably hit your fancy ; I am heartily glad you condescend to read & talk plain prose ; it is a very necessary commodity in life. The generality of mankind could not live even upon the quintessence of rainbows & moonshine. A good shoemaker is a good thing ; without such assistance the most refined philosophers & best poets in the world, God knows, might go barefoot.

"I am utterly ignorant where Mason is at present, whether grumbling at Sion-hill, or scarce existing, thro' indolence, at Aston ; but I expect every post will bring me a letter from him, & I hope, tell me that he has finished his odes for 'Caractacus.' . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Grosvenor-square, Nov. 4th, 1758.*

"MY LORD,— . . . I likewise called in upon Wilson; what he has done to the picture I cannot tell, but the likeness is considerably lessened. If I have time I am to give him a sitting before your Lordship comes to town: Captain Stephens finds no likeness at all, & Mr. Wright very little.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Admiral Boscawen's arrival the common papers have informed you of, as well as the taking Fort Frontenac. Am I to congratulate your Lordship on having the County of Oxford left open to you the next election? You should begin to accustom yourself to drink violet. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, December 16th, 1758.*

"MY LORD,— . . . We still abound in company, & Lord Holderness is expected every day. The new comedy is not yet come on at our theatre. Since I wrote the above Lord Holderness is arrived, & tho' he has not seen Miss Ford, is perfectly convinced from my representations of her that she is the wife in the world for Mason. She is excellent in music, loves solitude, & has immeasurable affectations; we think of proposing her to him. She is unfortunately in love already, but then there are some objections to

her present passion. The man, indeed, is six foot high, is an officer, and has a charming person; but having a wife and three children, & what is still worse, being at present on an expedition to Senegal, we are in hopes we may prevail. Painting is likewise her most favorite amusement, & for poetry, she has herself translated most of Metastasio's operas. Before I go on any farther, I ought to ask if your Lordship would not chuse I would rather interest myself for you? She would hit your *fantasque* to a hair, & the Ford family is exceedingly ancient, confessedly before the Bridges, so that the Duchess of Chandos must sink before her. Let me know your determination instantly. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park.*”

“MY LORD,— . . . . I fancy Hurd's reason for saying so little about Mary, Q. of Scots, is because he thought the situation of the times was such that it was Queen against Queen, & Protestantism against Popery; the two last dialogues are very great favorites of mine. Lady Jersey was something out of order yesterday, but is better to-day. I will talk with your Lordship about Barrington when I have the honor to see you at Middleton.



Is not the sensitive plant a little apt to be ruffled on the slightest touch? I remember Prior says—

“‘And with quick horror flies the neighb’ring hand.’

\* \* \* \* \*

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Grosvenor-square, June 23rd, 1759.*

“MY LORD, — Your Lordship is somewhat unconscionable to expect a long letter from an empty town, and from a person who very seldom goes out. A short one is much at your service, with many thanks for your obliging remembrance of me. Lady Jersey continues to mend, but very slowly. The little strength her Ladyship was ever mistress of seems mighty unwilling to return, but I hope when they can possibly let her begin to travel the air will have good effects. The town is so abominably hot that we have all-night sweats as well as Lord Villiers; his health, in general, seems re-established. As to Mary and Elizabeth, they were both undoubtedly of the Brim kind, but Mary was the handsomest woman. It is, I suppose, in complaisance to her beauty that you suppose her quite ignorant of her husband’s murder. That husband was a sad, foolish fellow, & in point of morals they were pretty well matched.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Wilson has made some alterations in my picture, which Mason said were much for the better.

Mason set out for Aston last Tuesday or Wednesday, nor would be prevailed upon to stay, tho' he was actually out of order. 'Caractacus,' as far as I can find, seems to be received as it ought to be. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Hotwell, Bristol, July 24th, 1759.*

"MY LORD,— . . . I am of opinion, at this distance, that the University acted right in not admitting Sheridan to harangue them. He is a kind of adventurer, & I have very little opinion of receipts for oratory. Your Lordship did very properly in not accepting your degree; party at a University is abominable, & every head that wore a blue cockade, or any cockade, to distinguish party, ought to have been broken. What were the *Terræ filius's* that I saw advertised in the Oxford paper? I presume they were low abuse by persons unknown upon persons unknown. Does your Lordship hear anything of Mason? I believe I told you in my last that I had heard from M<sup>rs</sup>. Wright that he had been very ill at Aston, but was recovering. I hope it was only the fever of fame, which a poet gets over mighty easily. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Oct. 29th, 1759.*

"MY LORD,—How can you possibly expect, after so many & repeated reflections thrown out upon the shortness of my letters, my scrawl, &c., &c., that I should ever venture to correspond with you at all? Your Lordship's handwriting is undoubtedly very much like that of a nobleman, & I dare say the first Duke of Normandy (if he *could* write) used exactly such characters. We inferior beings are contented to have our meanings decipher'd, & I cannot help looking upon your Lordship as exceedingly obliged to me for affording you such amusing employment in the country. This is certainly an s, no, it is a t, I'll lay you a pot of coffee of it, with a few comical conceits & a loud laugh or two, might make a whole fire-side happy for a long winter's evening, & send them away at last with an ardent desire for the *next merry meeting*. Could the hand of a writing-master produce any such effects, tho' he drew pens & swans all round the paper? This likewise is an art which makes a short letter a long one, & tho' you complain of a side & a-half, you cannot in conscience deny that you are as long in reading it as if it was a compleat sheet of paper.

\* \* \* \* \*

"My poor mare I am afraid I must part with, & I assure you it grieves me, for she has many

good qualities, & has done me infinite service. Was I master of an acre of ground of my own she should run in it for life, & I would sow it with fresh hay-seed for her. Poor thing, she will be reduced to carry turnips & cabbages to market, & keep company with asses, after having lived seven months in high life; she is, I dare say, of a very good family, her head & forehead proclaim it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mason has at last written to me, tho' not till I forced him to answer me a question. He is as peevish & discontented as ever, & grown still fonder of that terrible French word *ennui*. He tells me Dr. Brown is going to write against his Elegy to Hurd, & to prove him a liar with regard to what he says about the stage, & his not chusing to have his performances appear there. As to his Elegy, I told him my opinion of it long ago. His quarrels with authors he shall have entirely to himself. Your Lordship will be so good as to make my respects and compliments acceptable at Cockthorpe, & when you write to the Captain of Dragoons<sup>b</sup> I must beg you would insert my congratulations. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

<sup>b</sup> Lord Nuneham's brother.

*"Bath, November 25th, 1759.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . I take it mortally ill that your Lordship has not wished me joy of Lord Villiers' success in the House of Commons. However, I content myself with the very friendly & uncommon congratulations which Mr. Pitt has sent to Lord Jersey; indeed his Lordship has had as many addresses on the occasion as his Majesty on the taking Quebec. I was most excessively pleased with Mr. Spencer; there is something uncommonly agreeable in his voice & manner, & the matter & diction of his speech were just what they should be. I hope they will both continue what they have begun so well, & if they do, one thing I am sure of, that they will always speak sense. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Sept. 2nd, 1760.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . Had your Lordship come hither last week, contrary to my expectation, you had not found the family alone, Lord & Lady Weymouth & Mr. Thynne were here; the last still continues, & will stay 'till Monday. The north-room has been hanselled with two balls, at the latter of which auxiliaries were called in from Sr. James Dashwood's. A tabor & pipe & two fiddles formed the orchestra, & there was a very brilliant appearance of eight couple. I am

afraid there were too many people for your Lordship to have liked them all, or even to have supported the being in the same room with them. You need not have expatiated in your letter on that particular part of your Lordship's constitution, I know it very well, 'tis what Mason, as well as your Lordship, calls 'an *ennui*.' I cannot think you compliment Mr. West by saying he has the same infirmity; should people love one another better because they have both of them the jaundice? I mention that distemper only to hint to you where the real fault lies:—

“‘For all's infected that the infected spy,  
As all seems yellow to the jaundic'd eye.’

\* \* \* \* \*

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Sept. 16th, 1760.*

“MY LORD,— . . . . I am glad to find travelling agrees with my picture, I always thought all the features like, but the result of the whole not so, perhaps the light you have placed it in is advantageous to it. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Col. Johnson cut off two men's heads with his own hand, notwithstanding Miss West cautioned him against being so vulgar before he went abroad.

It is thought he will send her over the scalps to adorn her toilet."

*"Middleton Park, June 22nd, 1761.*

"MY LORD,—The most disagreeable thing your Lordship can receive must be a letter from the country, which is the only revenge I shall take upon you for your assertions & innuendos in your letter to my Lord Villiers. I had left cards at your door with all the unmeaning politeness of a person of your own rank; had called to inform you that we were hurrying out of Town,—as indeed you must have imagined, as you could not but know the unfortunate cause of it;—I had done even more: had been at Drury-lane House of a hot night, & stayed over the dance by Polly Capitani, in hopes of finding you, & yet you abuse me for want of attentions. All the harm I wish you is that you may stay the whole summer gossiping in Town, without knowing any one hour of it what to do with yourself. This I take to be pretty nearly your case at present, & that you would give your ears to be in Oxfordshire, if you was not afraid that Lady Cecilia & the Paganinis would think it vulgar. You are exactly in the situation of the poor Lady in Dr. Young's 'Satires,' who sat yawning & tired to death of herself & everything else, and yet—

"'Why went she not to bed?—because 'twas night.'



"Fie upon you, my Lord ; leave your Venetian ballads & your dusty streets for scenes like these—

" 'Where every bush with nature's music sings,  
And every breeze bears health upon its wings.'

"However, before you come, let us hear a little of what is going forward in your horrid metropolis. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*" Middleton Park, June 30th, 1761.*

"MY LORD,—You a wit, you a bravery of the age, & a frequenter of the pastimes of the Town, & not understand irony, because it happened to be a little dull! And so my letter, it seems, was all serious from the beginning to the end; and I left my cards out of *real* form, and I love the country to distraction, & all that. You are an unhappy splenetic thing, & want the clear country air more than I thought you did. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*" Bath, Aug. 24th, 1761.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . I have thought nothing about my comedy for some time past. It would be very extraordinary if none of the Pritchard family were to play in it, & yet M<sup>rs</sup>. Poyntz tells me that she believes M<sup>rs</sup>. Palmer advances so hap-

pily in her pregnancy, that it is doubtful whether she will play much this following winter, & Cælia, you know, must not be with child. But why do I talk of these trifles to your Lordship, who are totally immersed in weddings & coronations? I shall expect to find you a compleat courtier, that '*creeping, climbing, hot, cold thing*,' as Aaron Hill expresses it; & if I get a glimpse of you in the few days I am in London, 'must thank my stars, & call it luxury.' . . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

"*Middleton Park, Sept. 28th, 1761.*

"MY LORD,—I have once more the honour of addressing myself to your Lordship from the retirement of the country. It was with great difficulty, however, that I got away from London, for the twenty thousand additional people who came to see the coronation, were all setting out the same morning with myself, & not a post-horse to be had. You may guess I was very much vexed. At last a pair of horses were procured, which, as I was afterwards informed, were a waiting-job belonging to an old lady, who was to be deprived of her airing, & to be told that one of them was fallen lame; so much did the master of them prefer a little present profit to the obliging & constant customer. A pair of fine cattle they were, & whisked me to Uxbridge presently; I found no difficulty afterwards, & at Wickham mounted my own horse,

& rode to Middleton, where I arrived safe, but not without being a 'borrower of the night for a dark hour or twain.'

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"My friend Mr. Wright, who is at Dr. Harding's, talked of doing himself the honour of calling upon your Lordship. He wants your advice about prints, &c., which are proper to send to a young lady who loves drawing. Don't endeavour to impose upon him as a country clergyman, & make him send improper ones, for he is a Court Chaplain likewise, & will find you out. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Oct. 31st, 1761.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . I presume you have kept your irresolution, & staid in Town. I don't exactly remember the Duke de Longueville's character, but your Lordship acts very consistently with your own. I remember somewhere a Latin epigram on a weathercock which ends with this line,

" 'Et solum est constans in levitate sua.' "

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"What has become of Mason the preacher? Does he ever write to your Lordship? The *poet*, I know, was always a bad correspondent. Aston must have abundance of beauty at this time of the year, especially as it proves a wet season. Even their coals will not mend their roads now, unless

they could light them. Did he carry an apparatus of glasses down with him? for that was his scheme when I saw him in Town. I advised him to call the instrument a *Boufett*, to prevent his neighbours giving it the worse title of a butler's pantry. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, July 19th, 1762.*”

“MY LORD,— . . . . Your Lordship knows that I rejoiced much at Lady Cecilia's marriage. I rejoice equally in her pregnancy, & dare promise she will make a good wife, and a fruitful vine.

“Mrs. Pritchard's success gives me pleasure; when you know more particulars let me have them.

“As to books, I have read nothing since I left London, nor once opened my *porte feuille*, tho' it is full of combustibles.

“Mrs. Vernon (I suppose you know) is again with child. I have advised her to keep the embryo cool this warm weather by eating sallads & fruits. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, August 16th, 1762.*”

“MY LORD,— . . I can begin with nothing better than my congratulations to your Lordship on the birth of the Prince of Wales, as I know you are deeply interested in all great national events, or at least that you ought to be so. Pos-

sibly you are now in London to felicitate his Majesty, & I shall therefore address my letter to Cavendish-square.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I ride night and morning, and live the life of a post-boy. Physicians may say what they will, but fresh air & exercise are no such great things; they ought to be mixed with a little smoke, & dirt, & indolence. I was as well, in general, last winter, when I did not ride at all, as I am at present. A journey is well enough, but continual *taking the air* is a sad thing. I still heartily wish I could ramble with you to Wilton, &c., but the same impossibility continues. Another year may be more propitious, unless a wife (which I very much wish) should have stepped into your post-chaise; tho’ then I can ride on horseback, or be pretty company to the Abigail in the calash, & rival the butler.

\* \* \* \* \*

“How does your Lordship like the *tender* manifestoes of the Czarina with regard to her husband’s imprisonment and death? I am afraid she does not drink quite so much mild ale as he did. I wished myself with you at Barington, where I suppose you have been, as you signified such intentions in your last, & as Lady Talbot informed me that she expected you. I hope this fine summer has been of great use to Lady Harcourt. Within the last

day or two I presume the dog-days are begun, for it is monstrous cold. Do you ever hear anything of the Precentor, or is he wholly immersed in ecclesiastical matters? Mr. Fitzherbert & I have agreed that he must have his train borne at last, & 'take homage of the simple-minded crowd, ambassador of Heaven!' . . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 26th, 1762.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . All these late pieces of Rousseau I am quite a stranger to, except some extracts from them which have appeared in reviews & newspapers. He is a fine writer, but he loves paradoxes & sophisms a little too much, & seems to have worked himself up almost into a belief of them. I shall read him, however, when I have leisure; tho' I rather love authors who are strictly true as well as amusing. Your Lordship, I know, is of a different opinion; but some years hence you will think as I do.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Several of the places you intend to visit must be well worth seeing. Wilton I have long panted after; I should expect there to be put in mind of Italy, & at Stonehenge I should reverence the Druids. May good news from the Havannah<sup>c</sup> make your journey more pleasing.

"W. WHITEHEAD."

<sup>c</sup> Lord Nuneham's brother was quartered there.

*"Middleton Park, Sep. 18th, 1762.*

"MY LORD,—I will say again & again that you are an excellent correspondent ; you have been half my support this whole summer. I expect every day a continuation of your Journal, & wish I could return you anything as amusing, but that is not in my power.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What a charming relief the jaunt with your Lordship would have been to me ; Wilton, Stonehenge, the New Forest, &c., would have revived ideas which at present seem quite dead in me ; & you know I love being upon the road, tho' it is Westphalian. The Dean of Salisbury was very obliging to wish for my company ; that is a kind of town & society which I am sure I should like vastly ; nay, possibly, prefer it to London.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I presume this letter will catch your Lordship on the wing for the Installation ; O that blue ribbon<sup>d</sup> ! But I say no more ; it is a tender subject. People to be sure had it who lie buried in Stanton Harcourt Church ; & who would not be buried to have it dangle in statuary marble from their tomb ? especially in Stanton Harcourt Church. Heigh ho !

<sup>d</sup> Lord Nuneham at this time thought his father ill-used at not having the garter given him in reward for his services.



"I hope your Lordship said very handsome things for me to Lord Delawar on my not being able to wait upon him, & the honour he did me in desiring it. If Lady Cecilia was there you are doubtless well acquainted by this time with the nature of pregnancy, & will be able yourself to conduct Lady Nuneham through the several stages of it. I like to know a little of everything, & shall be glad of some lectures on the subject when I see your Lordship in town. Lady Talbot talks highly of the pleasure she received from your company at Barington. I wish I could have been on that party too, but everything with me is another year.

"W. WHITEHEAD.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I hope Winchester pleased your Lordship, for I have a partiality for the venerable place of my education. The inside of that cathedral is very fine; the college, to me, has its antique allurements. In the Library there your Lordship might have seen a pedigree traced literally from Adam to Henry the Sixth. Whether the Harcourt name is in it or not I really forget, but I am afraid many parts of it are fabulous. Perhaps your Lordship was entirely taken up with the Camp of the Militia."

*"Middleton Park, Oct. 24th, 1762.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . As to the speech you talk of at Lady Talbot's, I really remember nothing at all of the matter ; nor that I ever heard Churchill's name mentioned in such company. If I was ever guilty of so vulgar and common-place an expression, unless in jest, in any company at all, I should think I deserved a reprimand for it. I may have lamented, & perhaps with indignation, his throwing away his talents on subjects unworthy of him, and chusing to be a poet upon the town, rather than consulting the moral dignity of the character, particularly as he was a clergyman. I think so still, & am afraid the worst enemy he will ever meet with will be himself. A little of the dull method he complains of in me would be of infinite service to him, for, as yet, he has written nothing but rapsodys with striking parts in them. His legitimate works are still to come ; & if they ever do come I shall be one of the first to applaud them, for I honour the art, tho' I seldom & very occasionally practise it.

"I see by the papers that Mr. Howit of Salisbury is bringing a pastoral upon the stage, merely, I presume, to show off Mr. Norris. He is above regarding the success of it in any other respect than its being of use to the performer ; & has too much merit real and intrinsic to be hurt at a repulse from the wits and braveries. I shall

be glad to know the traits you mention of Garrick, tho' nothing shall ever induce me to quarrel with any of them. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Nov. 6th, 1762.*”

“MY LORD,— . . . . The trait of Garrick I can easily believe ; his temper is of that kind, & yet I do not think him an ill-natured man. I could give them stronger strokes against me than any they have launched, for half of them, considered rationally, are almost compliments.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I hope Mr. Stillingfleet is still with you ; his writings are of that kind which must render him respectable everywhere, & shew great good sense with an amiable disposition. I dare say as a friend & companion he is excellent, & how superior is that to all authorism ! . . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Nov. 10th, 1762.*”

“MY LORD,—I cannot pretend to answer your letters, I can only thank you for them. I neither see nor hear anything which can possibly amuse you ; London I pant after, but our departure from hence is by no means fixed, tho' the weather grows very cold, & the days very short. Lord

Villiers gives me great pleasure by the account he has heard of your brother's behaviour at the Havannah, & I congratulate you & your family on the occasion.

"Amongst all the actors you mentioned I think your Lordship might have bestowed one line upon him who has played his part so well, & indeed I was impatient to hear of him. I hope he will now volunteer it no longer, for climates are the worst of enemies to encounter.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Churchill, I find, has been attacking me vehemently. I suppose he takes some part of the *charge* to himself, & does not feel the satire quite so pointless as he affects to call it. But peace be with him; a violent adversary, who says anything of anybody, is not a very dangerous one. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, July 11th, 1763.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . The Hyde family left Middleton on Friday last, as did her Grace the Duchess of Queensberry, after passing one night here, & endeavouring to recollect the ideas of past pleasure; she was exactly herself, very clever, very whimsical, & just not mad. The Duke of Grafton has likewise stayed one night here, so that we have lately been but little alone. Captain

Stephens is gone into waiting at Gunnersbury, where he is the only male creature admitted ; so rigid are the laws of the place that his man-servant is not allowed to attend him. Her Highness's own footmen are, I presume, properly prepared, & the Chaplain, you know (according to Lady Wishfort's account), wears petticoats. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, August 2nd, 1763.*”

“MY LORD,— . . . I most heartily wish Lord Villiers was really going to be married, but I literally know nothing of the matter.

\* \* \* \* \*

“As to my own marriage, which you retort upon me, the power, not the will, is wanting. Could I maintain a wife, & find a proper one, I would not be long unshackled. A moderate precarious income has but little allurements in these days, when

‘No rat is rhimed to death, nor maid to love ;’

& indeed it would be madness to think of raising a family without a prospect of at least a tolerable provision for them. As a single man I can jog on, easy, if not happy, but when (as has been said of a parson's wife in her black bombazeen) *post equitem sedet atra cura*, the case, my good Lord, is strangely altered ; but of this enough. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“ *Middleton Park, Sept. 11th, 1763.*

“MY LORD,—I had the honour of your last the day I returned from Bath ; I am ashamed to say how long that is ago, but purging waters always make people good-natured & forgiving, so that if you are still at Brighthelmstone I am safe.

“The distress your delicacy must have felt from the distance and other circumstances of a certain temple made me laugh extremely ; I know you was never fond of public worship, tho’ you often saw it performed on the ramparts at Rheims, where young men & maidens, old men & children met together to celebrate M—ass, properly uncovered. It was the only foreign custom you did not eagerly embrace, & I despair of your ever acquiring a proper confidence for it in this dull climate. The true *mauvaise honte* is peculiarly English, for we are not only shamefaced, but — I need say no more. Your other difficulties of the landlady, stage-coachmen, & waggoners, I should rather have enjoyed, as the fine Neapolitan air you talk of would have made one chearful. That shivering after bathing was not right, & I shall hope to hear you felt no more of it. The papers tell us of terrible storms which attacked your *fine air* in particular, & did great damage. Mr. Vernon<sup>e</sup>,

<sup>e</sup> Eldest son of Lord Vernon by his first wife, a Howard of Effingham. Mr. Vernon married the heiress of Newick in Sussex, & had also a property in Wales.

too, sends shocking accounts of the havoc at Newick. I fancy your Lordship imagined yourself at Naples in reality, & that Vesuvius & the *solfaterra* were both let loose upon you. We had lightning in abundance but no mischief, tho' we passed Barford Downs that very day, called at Lady Talbot's, & reached Middleton in the evening.

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"Lord Villiers is with us at present, & has been some time; not a partridge in the country can be quiet for him, he quite stocks Lord Jersey's table with game, & walks among stubble & furze for six or eight hours together, not without a pretty deal of detriment to his legs, which are stuck all over with thorns like a pincushion. Does not your Lordship envy him his diversion? The hounds, too, I think they say, are to be out to-morrow; I shall probably if I ride out, be in at the death of something or other. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Oct. 6th, 1763.*

"MY LORD,—If ever I should be tempted to write the history of your Lordship's life, I shall certainly beg the favour to have your own character drawn by yourself, you do it so impartially. I could swear to the truth of every part of your behaviour at Brighthelmstone, from the zenith of your popularity to its mild decline. Why would



not you come away a fortnight sooner? Was it necessary that they should see your shades as well as your lustre? It is said of Queen Elizabeth that she always chose to have her pictures drawn without shade, but your Lordship is too good a painter to put us off with a half-performance, tho' that I think it might have done very well for strangers, & you might have reserved your blemishes, as most people do, for your particular friends. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Oct. 22nd, 1763.*”

“MY LORD,—Your Lordship was in a most delightful humour when you did me the honour of writing your last; your own words of *ennuié* & *ennuiant* seem to paint it exactly. That same Rousseau has so much really excellent in him, that you take the bad part for granted, & are as much convinced by his sophistry as his reasoning. A misanthrope must be of all men the most compleatly miserable; he is continually acting in contradiction to his nature, & has no support under necessary or accidental evils, because he wants the social affections. Happily for mankind, whatever your Lordship at certain times may think, no such being did ever exist,—

‘No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,  
No cavern’d hermit, rests *self*-satisfied;  
All who to shun or hate mankind pretend,  
Seek an admirer, & would fix a friend.’

So charmingly does even our vanity, when we have no better motive, counteract our pride. But enough of this; if I go on much farther we shall divide your Lordship's words between us, I shall be the *ennuiant*, & you the *ennuïé*.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

"Now for the weather (for you complain of the shortness of my letters). The season here, tho' cold, is very fine; the hounds of the hunters, & guns of the shooters, sound in my ears every morning, & Blossom has fallen down with me but once. The verdure, indeed, seems in a hurry to leave both the trees & the park, & the dying flowers hang their heads as if they intended shortly to adorn the bier of nature. There's pretty writing for you; nothing steals on more flowingly towards the bottom of a page than a stream of poetical allusions, & if one must pile it, you know, one must. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

"*Middleton Park, Nov. 8th, 1763.*

"MY LORD,—I am now writing to you booted & spurred, it being that kind of morning in which restless people cannot well go out, & yet do not chuse to stay comfortably at home. Lord Villiers, indeed, & Captain Stephens are, by this time, up to the knees in water shooting snipes, & Lord Jersey & your humble servant have been in the

garden, shifting quarters, as the rain permitted, from the stoves to the green-house. Such weather will, I hope, soon drive us to London: if we must enjoy wet air I would chuse to have it in perfection on the banks of the Thames.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have just read Churchill's *fourth* book of the 'Ghost.' It is infinitely worse than any of the former; a confused heap of vulgar, common-place stuff, without having the least ease, which is the very thing it aims at. I suppose it was written merely to fill up his volume: the ten-syllable verse is his fort, if he does not write too much of it. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, June 21st, 1764.*

"MY LORD,—... Before I go any farther I must ask your Lordship what is the best thing to get mildew off from pictures? two of the best at Middleton are much infected with it. I heartily wish your Lordship & Mason were here to clean them; it would be instructive to us & amusing to yourselves, & an excuse, during this fine weather, for never stirring out of doors. I was up this morning by six o'clock, &, besides the fresh air, &c., had the satisfaction of seeing a heron shot, who was come a fishing to one of the ponds.

It was full as good sport as our heron hunting at Dresden, exclusive of the sham quarrels & that innocent merriment we had the honour to partake of when Royalty condescended to unbend itself. But you are an infidel with regard to the country, & therefore I will enjoy it quietly, & say no more of it. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, July 5th, 1764.*”

“MY LORD,— . . . We have odd accounts here of your cousin Guerchy<sup>f</sup>, as if he had exerted a little French tyranny against that sacred animal an English constable. Can it be true? The constable doubtless is of *no family*, but, as Shakespear says, ‘a dog’s obeyed in office,’ & few courts of law have the happiness to have such respectable persons as Mr. Edmondson at the head of them. And yet how preferable would a Court of Honour be to that vulgar thing a Court of Equity, —perish the *canaille* !

\* \* \* \* \*

“Your Lordship’s receipt for the pictures shall be followed this very day, if it is in my power to prevail. You are certainly in the right in your ‘*tirer parti de tout*,’ when necessity, or our proper attentions to other people require it; at other times I would chuse my amusements; & even

<sup>f</sup> Son of the Duc de Harcourt.

in the hogstye & cow-yard, as Addison says of Virgil's shepherds, 'I would toss my dung about with an air of majesty.' I should have supposed that the pleasures of imagination would have been exactly to your Lordship's taste. That delicate painting of the finer feelings, that giving 'to airy nothing a local habitation and a name,' are the things in the world which seem most suited to your errors<sup>g</sup> as well as your excellencies. We must read them together when we have an opportunity. Has your Lordship seen the 'Life of Cardinal Pole?' It is written by an acquaintance of mine, &, that you may be more partial to it, an ingenious man, & a *Catholic* priest; I have not read it yet, but shall have it down this week. The Cardinal was an uncommon man, & made a figure at the revival of learning, besides his blood-royal connections with our Mary & Elizabeth. There seems scope for a pleasing history; how it is executed I know not. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

"*Bath, August 7th, 1764.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . I shall be very glad to be shewn *Nuneham*<sup>h</sup> at my return from Bath,—which

<sup>g</sup> "N.B. I put in *errors* because in your last you were very vain."

<sup>h</sup> The spelling was altered from "Newnham," at this time, to distinguish the place from various other Newnhams which exist. Mr. Whitehead & Lord Villiers used to joke about the alteration.

is my present residence,—& hope I shall not be an unworthy worshipper even in the Grecian temple. I love a little heathenism *in buildings*, & should have made a good practical idolater. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Sept. 25th, 1764.*

“MY LORD,— . . . I have seen nothing of Lord Herbert’s Life, which I fancy must be amusing. He was a philosophical man, & thought a good deal for himself, & lived, as you say, in a romantic age; from all which his manners must have taken a tincture very different from modern nobility. I have but little prospect of reading it till I get to Town, & then it will probably be by your Lordship’s means. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Oct. 21st, 1764.*

“MY LORD,— . . . I have gone through my friend the Catholic’s book more minutely than your Lordship, & am afraid, if the laws were strictly put into execution, my friend might be hanged for his performance; (in Sweden they would only have gelt him). It is a barefaced attack upon the Reformation, & as barefaced a defence of the Catholic religion. He seems as great a bigot as his hero the Cardinal; the Pope & the unity of the Church bewitched them both. I am

told likewise (for I had not the books to refer to) that his quotations are often false, or mangled & misrepresented ; that he has borrowed his learning from Collier's History ; & that nothing but his style, some occasional reflections, & his good intentions of saving our souls, are his own. I had a good deal of amusement, however, from the first parts of his book. The Council of Trent, after all his defence of it, was undoubtedly what Bolingbroke calls it, 'a solemn banter.' Charles V., Francis I., & even the Pope himself, had only a mind to please some well-meaning people, to cheat the vulgar, & to confirm their several monarchical powers. The pompous description of High Mass must have tickled your Lordship's religious notions, I am sure, for it made me laugh very much. How poor Erasmus is abused for being a little comical ; but I will shew you something with regard to that when I have the pleasure of seeing you ; and pray, when is that to be ? We have nobody here but Lord Villiers, who has dined two days at Blenheim, & danced one night with the Duke of York. Lord Jersey has been confined to his bed-chamber for some days past, but hopes to get downstairs again to-morrow.

"Is there anything in what we see in the newspapers of an intended match between Mademoiselle Nangis & the Chevalier Déon ? Now all the Harcourt, Guise, Lorraine blood rises in your face.



*He* marry Mademoiselle ! Why, my Lord, something has certainly happened to stop his publications, & it might do Monsieur Guerchy no harm in his negociations to have such a son-in-law. But this, I perceive, is a tender subject, & therefore I desist. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*“ Middleton Park, Nov. 4th, 1764.*

“MY LORD,— . . . What a slip Lady Harriet W—— has made; an Irishman, a footman, & who has been a foot-soldier. They were asked, it seems, regularly in St. George’s Church, & are set out for Ireland. North America is the proper receptacle for ladies of quality who have made a *faux pas*; we should enrich our colonies with half-strained illustrious blood. The name of Sturgeon, however, is not so heroic as one could wish, unless they would settle in our fisheries; there, indeed, they might make a figure. Are not you unmarried young men of quality principally to blame for these errors of the ladies? Mend, therefore, & marry. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*“ Middleton Park, July 14th, 1765.*

“MY LORD,— . . . I have been in the country above this month, & have heard scarce anything but political news, except the unfortunate end of the D. of Bolton. The public papers, besides let-

ters, will have told you the changes in the administration, as far as they have proceeded hitherto. Lord Villiers has kissed hands as Vice-Chamberlain, & performs, I believe, to-day for the first time in that office. Your other friend, Lord Spencer, will, I fancy, be an Earl. I hope to see your Lordship with a white stick, if it is consistent with your duty in another place. How the young administration is to go on I really cannot tell; but youth has some virtues undoubtedly which other folks have worn out, but then they have gained experience in the room of them, & cunning besides.

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"I am afraid we shall see but little of Mr. Vice-Chamberlain this summer, unless his Privy-Counsellorship should be turned out again soon. Should not he get a little tie-wig, & a pair of very high-heeled shoes? Grave he will be enough, & keep a secret,—Lord! how he will keep a secret! If they knew him they would call him to the Cabinet. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, August 10th, 1765.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . We shall be at Middleton before the end of next week, where, if you can steal a moment from love, Lord Jersey will be very happy to see you; it lies naturally in your way to Derbyshire. O how the little heart there flutters! as Lady Beverley says in the play. I am

getting into a way lately of quoting myself, as Lord Villiers can testify from my last letter to him. We authors are very vain.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I was got thus far in my letter when my apothecary came in to feel my pulse & propose an emetic; but Lord Jersey. a great doctor, is quite against it, so that I have escaped this time, & have since eat a better moderate dinner than I have done for many days past. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, August 22nd, 1765.*

"MY LORD,—Your Lordship is never more entertaining in your letters than when you write in, what you call, an ill-humour. I own I am surprised that an admirer & a judge of painting, as you know a certain person is, should be such an enemy to its elder, & more comprehensive, sister, poetry; that an eye should distinguish beauty, & yet the understanding be blind to it, it must be the mechanical part of painting, & not the imaginative that strikes him. A virgin in the clouds with saints below, well done, would have the same effect with the death of Germanicus, or Guido's Crucifixion. It is the same undoubtedly with regard to prospects, many people are astonished at them who never feel them. But of this enough.

\* \* \* \* \*

"My mind as well as body is so much improved

by the Bath waters that I believe I shall write plays again whether I will or not. A thousand conceits are ready to boil over, but they may be only froth, a delicate allusion ! some people would add that then all the fat will be in the fire, but I dare not offend your Lordship by such vulgarity. Why do you suffer the newspapers to be so indecent in their expressions ? They not only say that a treaty of marriage is on foot, but likewise that it will be speedily *consummated* ; sure this is as bad as Mrs. Vernon's speech about ringing the bell ; both Lord Jersey & your humble servant were shocked at it. Not that it is not a very common manner of speaking, but we were apprehensive of its effects on chaste ears.

“But I must stop here, for I may be writing at this very moment, for aught I know, to a married man, & then spouse must see the letter. Some words in your last shew an impatience, which may have hurried things into execution sooner than I expected. I must begin to correct my stile, & weigh my expressions before I set them down. What would Lady Talbot think of this ? I shall say to myself before I shall dare to insert a hint which even straggles toward incontinence. Yes, yes, I will match you for purity, I warrant you ; you shall have no occasion to double down a single paragraph in any of my letters, or be once asked ‘how far may I read, my Lord ?’

"In the meantime your Lordship may write what you please to me, & as often as you please, & your direction will be always safest to Grosvenor-square. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Sept. 3rd, 1765.*

"MY LORD,—I do not like some parts of your letter; I am afraid your *ennui*, as you call it, is very busy in prejudging future events, & laying in a stock of imaginary distress, for fear the real should fail you. You are now entering into a scene of life which may be happy if *you* please; proper attentions to one person, & proper affection to another, are your grand points. The latter will be mighty easy, & the former not difficult, unless you make it so by being, what Pope says, 'tremblingly alive all o'er.' Banish little self & whim, & trust to your real good sense for the consequences. Nobody can wish for your happiness more than I do, & you shall not persuade me out of the expectation of it. Would you be angry with a blind man who laughed at you for seeing? certainly not, unless you chose to squint or play tricks with your eyes, & then you would feel you deserved it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I shall like to hear the little history of the great French Court, & therefore beg you will not

forget it 'till after I have had the pleasure of meeting you; as to your wits & literaries, I should have liked to have heard something of them too, but if you have nothing to say about them I will take up with folly, which is much more laughable. Our heron-hunting with the King & Queen of Poland (not forgetting the Princes Xavier & Charles, Count Brughl, &c.) had more diversion in it than all we heard from Bell & Mascon, & you will remember little Ciangulo when you have forgotten Metastasio, Hyerolti, Voltaire, & Mademoiselle Denis. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*“Middleton Park, Sept. 19th, 1765.”*

“MY LORD,— . . . I will add from myself that if you come to Nuneham & go from thence into Derbyshire, Middleton will lie in your way. I begin to be as impatient for the day as your Lordship can be, & you will see how matrimony was in my head by the inclosed little essay<sup>1</sup>, which you must keep as a manuscript in your library for your own use & that of your posterity. It is a family receipt, but, oh grief of griefs, what a condition am I obliged to send it in; I had sew'd it together in another sheet of paper, with my own needle & my own silk (I have never an

<sup>1</sup> This essay has no particular merit, and is hardly in accordance with modern views of propriety in writing; it is therefore omitted.

huswife), as finically as Mason would have done, & lo! it was then too big for a letter, crumble it into what shape I would. If you think you shall have half the trouble in reading it which I had in writing it over, & stitching it together, throw it into the fire immediately; at all events let it be sewed up again, as the marks of the needle will direct, before you attempt to look at it. I have paged it, that there may be no mistake; it looked much handsomer in its cover. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Sept. 28th, 1765.*”

“MY LORD,— I am desired by Lord Jersey to send his most affectionate compliments to your Lordship (as he is not very well able to write himself), & to beg that you will make his congratulations acceptable to the Harcourt & Vernon family on an event which gives him great pleasure, as he is sure it must greatly add to their happiness, as well as your Lordship’s. You will give him infinite satisfaction by even the shortest visit you can make him with your own convenience, & he takes the earliest opportunity of testifying his acknowledgements for the intention. I take the advantage of his sending a servant on purpose to offer my respects & congratulations at the same time, which I hope your Lordship will be so good as to introduce with propriety.



I am exceedingly obliged by your last letter, in which you are too partial to an idle attempt to amuse; I merely meant to ridicule the nonsensical trifles which often make even sensible people unhappy. King Stanislaus says in one of his maxims, that people who enter into the marriage state should not only promise to love one another, but to endeavour to please one another; a most material article. You cannot have more happiness than I most sincerely wish you, who am always, . . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.

“P.S. The Bride & Bridegroom is our first toast after dinner.”

“*Grosvenor-square, June 23rd, 1766.*

“MY LORD,— . . . . Your informers with regard to the Duke of Grafton are by no means in the secret, as you will perceive in the end. His character rises daily & hourly; & I am glad for posterity that he is a young man, for he will be their sheet-anchor one time or other. Lord Chatham is certainly better; the Opposition go on teizing, but lose ground continually; the Duke of Richmond & Lord Temple are the heroes. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, July 4th, 1766.*

“MY LORD,— . . . . Lord Jersey, your cousin Jersey, for he now always calls himself so, is laid

up in some measure with the gout, & has not been out of the house this week. He desires, nevertheless, his kindest compliments to you, & begs you would not forget to enquire after L'isle Adam in your return through France. I have a great notion myself that the cinquefoils were picked up in Leicestershire, or some other part of England, & did not come from Normandy; nay, I have some notion that the cross & escallops were prior to the times of Edward 1<sup>st</sup>. (tho' then resumed), & rather belong to the first Crusade. But this is not a subject to talk of in a letter; if your Lordship was here I would teize you with conjectural proofs, 'till you almost laughed at that sacred science, Heraldry.

"Lord Villiers, fie upon him, troubles himself very little about his genealogy, & cares no more for the Conqueror, or even Charlemagne & Pharamond, than if no such worthies had ever existed. You may put a bead, or a fess, or a chevron, or nothing at all, between the cinquefoils, it is all one to him; & if you drop them entirely you have his consent very readily. The Duke of Buckingham put the cross first & the cinquefoils in the second place of his arms, & there they stand ready blazoned, three cinquefoils & a fess argent on a field sable. Is not this fine stuff to fill up a letter with? But what have I else to say? . . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*" Middleton Park, August 12th, 1766.*

"MY LORD,—I can easily conceive how much such a place as Spa must take up your time, when the retirement, as it is called, of Middleton will not permit me to have a moment to myself. All water-drinking places have exactly the same rules, & indeed he would be a cruel physician who should order the frequenters of them to write & read, notwithstanding dissipation itself is the disease of most of them. Your Lordship & I know several persons by whom even a satirical touch upon the times, tho' not half the size of a six-penny pamphlet, and tho' it abused their dearest friends unmercifully, could never be gotten through without many doublings down. A serious 'Spectator,' or the best hundred lines in Milton, would be deadly poison to them, if they did not luckily always act as an opiate.

"Now I am on the subject of reading I must ask your Lordship whether you have heard anything lately of your friend Rousseau? His vanity, it seems, which you thought vanquished by his philosophy, has once more revived, and he has abused Mr. Hume extremely for not letting him be made a show of in London; so true are some parts of Voltaire's prophecy. Lord Villiers is my informer, & may possibly have acquainted your Lordship with more particulars. He certainly intended to do it, & to laugh likewise,

as far as his gravity could laugh in a letter. He told me, too, he should transmit to you the present state of politicks. Mr. Pitt's earldom makes a great noise: it has certainly, I am afraid, put him in the power of certain persons, if they chuse to play him false. But let us hope the best, & that he will be permitted to do *some* good before he is totally eclipsed by greatness. Lord Temple is outrageous, & the Opposition may probably be formidable: but those are not the persons I fear. True magnanimity is rarely conquered by outward assaults; the arrow which flieth by day is trifling when compared with the pestilence which walketh in darkness. All this is *entre nous*, & perhaps should not have been written down.

"You delight me exceedingly when you tell me the waters are of service to you. I hope you find them still more & more so, & that the Chevalier Pouhon & Mademoiselle Geronstere grow fonder & fonder of you every day. *Les amours de Pouhon*, &c., with the nymphs & the mountains, are perfectly French; in English vulgarity it would have been 'The loves of Beau Pump & Miss Bucket,' with the comical humours of spout, handle, & rope.

"PUMP.—(*By Mr. Beard, in a languishing posture.*)

"'Give me water, lovely Bucket,  
Thro' my own spout let me suck it;

Yet at what can water aim?

Water cannot quench my flame.'—*Da Capo.*

“BUCKET.—(*By Mrs. Clive, in a brown lute-string lined with pea-green, curled & powdered.*)

‘Ah me, Mr. Pump,

You give such a thump

To my heart every word that you speak,

That, if my relations

Thwart my inclinations,

I am sure my poor sides they will break.

But I am determined with you to elope,

Or else I will hang myself in my own rope.

But I am determined, determined, determined,

I’m determined, Fol de rol de rol, &c.’

“N.B. The music by the best composers.

“Your cousin Jersey desires his kindest compliments, & says the relationship is the pride of his life; he honours the widow Montmorency for the judiciousness of her choice. You are very lucky in meeting with Prince Firmian; he cannot remember *me*, or I should offer my respects. Your Lordship may offer them, however, to Mrs. Craster, & say civil things from Lord Jersey to the same lady. Do you hear anything from Prince Firmian of our other friend, Count Sauro, or of his brother, whom we knew at Naples? You say nothing of Lady Nuneham, & therefore I pre-

sume she is well, &, I hope, diverted; my best wishes and respects always attend her. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.

“P.S. Is your Lordship of the Picheley Hunt? They wear, I find, red coats, with white capes; coat gules, cape argent.

“Your Lordship will remember, if you come through France, to inquire after the three cinque-foils & fess argent in field sable,—whether that was the Villiers’s arms, or whether they bore the cross and escallops in France, after the first (not second) Crusade?”

“*Middleton Park, September 26th, 1766.*

“MY LORD. . . . The parliament, undoubtedly, will meet the eleventh of November, & Lord Chatham will then see whether the nation chuses to be saved or not. The scurrility against him has been very poor; but the discontent with regard to his peerage rather too general. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Bath, Dec. 21st, 1766.*

“MY LORD,— . . . Apropos to you gentlemen *virtuosi* & *connoisseurs*. I lodge in the house of a miniature painter, who has a daughter that is a miracle. Her drawings are greatly admired, & she gets premiums every year from the Arts &

Sciences. Her ambition is to be the Angelica of ten years hence. I have not yet visited her, fie upon me; Mason would have sat with her from morning to night, & have hung over her—I mean her drawings—enamoured. Her eldest sister, the mantua-maker, is a very well-bred, chatty girl; I have a good deal of conversation with her. They know I have been in Italy, I must therefore be very cautious of exposing my ignorance in the *fine arts*. I have forgotten all the terms, but hope, by means of a judicious reserve, & a little obliging admiration, to come off tolerably; I will let your Lordship know my success. Lord Villiers, by his letters, seems very well entertained at Althorpe, & I am excessively glad of it, but I am afraid Christmas, or New Year's Day, or some nonsense or other, will call him up to Town sooner than he would wish.

“I forgot to tell your Lordship that our young paintress is a musician too, & cuts paper as divinely as the angel in the punch-house sign mentioned by the ‘Spectator’ squeezes lemons. She seems to have all Mason’s qualifications except his poetry,—at least I have heard nothing of that yet, but shall not be surprized if I should find out that she has, now & then, busied herself in writing sonnets to Damon. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”



" *Bath, Dec. 28th, 1766.*

"MY LORD,—You are very comical, I believe I should say comic, in your description of a country Christmas. There are great numbers who would be very happy to partake of those jollities which you treat with ridicule ; I am not sure that I should not like some of them myself, especially if your Lordship was there, for your *ennui* would entertain me. Tho' you talk of your solitude with pleasure, I think there is a little spleen in your expressions which does not look like absolute content ; either you did not like the opera, or Lady Something had disgusted you there, or Louis was not at home when you came back, or the bread was toasted too little, or was too much burned. In short, some grievance of equal consequence there was which mixed itself with your stile, & gave a serious turn even to your merriment.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have had as good a dinner lately as you could possibly have had in Derbyshire, with Mr. Colborne, whom you saw at Spa, & some of his Christmas friends, & I do assure you great good humour on all sides made it very agreeable. Your Lordship would have thought some of the ladies vulgar, perhaps, but we were *very merry*, and I had my *bon-mots* & *reparties* as well as they.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You should go & sit a charitable evening now

& then in Grosvenor-square, & not bear malice. Lord Villiers, I presume, must be up for New Year's Day. I take it for granted he is well, tho' he has not told me so lately. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, April 27th, 1767.*

"MY LORD,—Your Lordship's letter is so superabundantly obliging that I scarce know how to answer it; indeed I should quite despair if there were not mixed with the compliments some reflections on my incapacity of being pretty company. Now that I positively deny, and could bring very many country ladies & country gentlemen, who are here at present, to vouch for the contrary; but yesterday, in the evening, I was rather more than amusing to at least a dozen of them, & I assure you my reputation rises as I make myself more & more public. Self-defence obliges me to this declaration, and modesty must, for once, submit. As to any satisfaction I gave your Lordship at Nuneham, it could be only that of not confining you. I was delighted with the place, & your Lordship's behaviour to me, but I do not remember that I was guilty of being in the least entertaining; I rather bore my faculties meekly than made any violent display of them, & continued in that complacent stile till I arrived at Bath.

\* \* \* \* \*

"There are the fewest people of quality here that I think I ever remember in so full a season, but I have private acquaintance in abundance. Mr. Garrick & I are dear friends, & a great deal of civility passes between me & our other wits. The waters agree with me, as usual: I am at present lodged in a magician's house, & talk as wisely & as cautiously upon magic as I did last year upon painting.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"I have seen the 'English Merchant' performed here, & am going to-night to the 'Maid in the Mill.' Mrs. Reddish, who played Lady Alton, is really a showy woman, tho' no great actress. She is the Polly Hart whom Churchill celebrates, & whom one of my knights (St. W. Draper) is supposed to have brought upon the stage.

"That nasty word *ennui*, which your Lordship & poor Mason are so fond of, I wish to see banished from both your dictionaries. It is a kind of voluntary torture which people are so good as to supply themselves with, for fear life should not be unhappy enough without it: catch every golden minute, & let a proper resignation support the rest.

"My best respects & compliments attend Lady Nuneham; & I have the honour to be,

"My Lord, . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, May 10th, 1767.*

"MY LORD,—That there is no real glory to be gained by *ennui* I will easily grant, but I fancy we feel a kind of visionary fame in the indulgence of it. Don't we imagine that we have a superior understanding & finer sensations than other people, and therefore resolutely determine not to be pleased with what engages the attention of the vulgar? In our good-natured moods we are, perhaps, so benevolent as to lament that Heaven has made us too perfect, & most heartily wish that we had coarser organs, & could condescend to be entertained, & to entertain. This, you perceive, is absolute affectation.

"As to that honest *ennui* which is a bodily distemper, nothing but some continual pursuit or other, with air & moderate exercise, can get the better of it; no man of business ever had it, no sportsman, but at certain seasons, & the labouring clown never heard of it at all; it is merely another name for the spleen. Your Lordship has an advantage which thousands want—a power of self-amusement, & if you would force yourself to mix in active life you would find even that power increased; I do not mean gay life, polite life, for that, perhaps, is the source of half the *ennui* of the nation; but useful life, such as man is born to, & which persons of your Lordship's station can do most good in. Be a statesman; be a justice of

peace ; be a farmer ; be anything which can promote public good, & you are sure of your reward, private happiness. I am sorry you persist in your resolution of going out of Parliament, & it is owing to my concern on that account that you are troubled with all this elaborate common-place, which is true, tho' it wants novelty. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Grosvenor-square, May 23rd, 1767.*”

“MY LORD,—Lord Villiers tells me that his eyes are much better, & desires me to make his acknowledgements to your Lordship for your very kind anxiety about them. He seems wonderfully busy about the St. Albans' election, which I am glad of, for to have something always to do is the best receipt both for acquiring & preserving health. I wish your Lordship had some such affair on your hands, & was eager in the pursuit of it ; it would be an excellent antidote to all kinds of Rousseauism. I find that excentric genius has now ran away from Mr. Davenport, written a letter to the Chancellor for protection, & received an answer to assure him that this was a country of freedom, & that he might either leave it or stay in it, just as he pleased, without molestation. How restless his vanity makes him, & to what a degree of madness he carries it. Has your Lordship no cottage at Nuneham for his recep-

tion? You might possibly, by your attentions, keep him there three weeks if you would suffer him to be shewn occasionally to the Oxonians. I pity him exceedingly, for he is certainly mad, & should be taken care of under that predicament.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I find by the Dublin newspapers that they are now acting at Barry's house the *Roman Father*, with considerable alterations. Who has made them I cannot tell, but I should be very glad to see them. It is a new method of proceeding in an author's life-time, but, if they are tolerably done, might give one a hint. I shall endeavour to procure them; if they print them, which Garrick tells me they have or will, some friend in Ireland might smuggle one a copy. I am altering the fifth act myself, for Garrick to play it next winter. . . .

"I am, my Lord, &c., &c.,

"W. WHITEHEAD."

"Grosvenor-square, June 11th, 1767.

"MY LORD,— . . . The approach of summer (& we have had some days which squinted that way) will soon remove any weakness which may have arisen from the complaint, or from the discipline which attended the cure.

\* \* \* \* \*

"We hear nothing now of your friend Rousseau, so that I presume, as M<sup>rs</sup>. Clive says, he is got

clear off. Let him have suffered what he will, the suspecting all mankind is not a proof of a sound mind, or a perfectly good heart. I admire his writings, tho' great part of them are paradoxical. I even admire his nicest feelings when they are within an hundred miles of the confines of common sense, & would have his utmost extravagancies treated with tenderness. He is become a froward child, & his understanding, tho' it may instruct others, seems of no use to himself in regard to practice. I have read Voltaire's verses as well as I could make them out; one might approve of them in a moderate writer, but Voltaire should be above writing moderate things.

"Garrick has sent me one copy of the 'R. Father,' as it is cut for the Irish stage, but I dare say it is not that which they are now acting. There is a great deal left out, but nothing added; the play itself was originally a skeleton, & those barbarous people have anatomized it over again; a kind of blunder, but not so good-natured a one as they are usually guilty of. My best respects, &c., attend Lady Nuneham and Lord Harcourt.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"Your Lordship, in the meantime, is enjoying all the excellencies of Nuneham, & if you are not contented, & even delighted, with them I shall accuse you of Rousseauism. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."



*“ Middleton Park, July 14th, 1767.*

“MY LORD,— . . . . I am glad you are to be at the Mayor’s feast, I am glad you are to be at Abingdon races, I hope you have been at the Oxford Act<sup>1</sup>, & I wish you were obliged to attend all the Corporation dinners and horse-coursing work of the ensuing summer. I know you would fancy you suffered a great deal of *ennui* in private, but in public (*entre nous*) your Lordship’s—what shall I call it?—vanity, or a desire of pleasing, would not allow you to be disagreeable.

“To be the first person in the place; to be addressed with deference, & that deference mixed with a satisfaction at having the honour to address you at all; to see a glow of happiness playing on Mrs. Mayoress’s plenteous countenance when she gives both hands in the conclusion of the minuet, or receives her fan from some humble relation who can never aspire to equal dignity; to have every black silk gown with pink ribbons in the whole assembly bursting with desire to be taken notice of; to have half a word give pleasure, and a familiar smile raise into rapture even a decayed beauty of three-score; to overhear whispers in every corner of the room of ‘How charmingly he looks!’ ‘How delightfully he is dressed!’ ‘He is certainly the best bred man in England; you know,

Madam, I always said it:—these, my Lord, are gratifications which will repay the little trouble you may be at to gain them; &, I dare say, could I be invisible in the Abingdon ball-room, I should certainly see you enjoying most of them. I shall ask Lady Nuneham, the next time I have the honour of seeing her, how you have behaved yourself? & shall expect a very favourable account. Lord Villiers will tell me what passes at St. Albans.

“We hear nothing more of your friend Rousseau, nor does any body seem to know where he is. Perhaps your Lordship can inform me; it would be very kind, for by that means I should appear knowing, as I am often asked after him in letters by persons who respect his talents. We were told in London that he began to think Mr. Hume not so much his enemy as he had once imagined him to be. . . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Aug. 8th, 1767.*”

“MY LORD,— . . . . That the devout Gresset should entertain Mons<sup>r</sup>. Rousseau the great genius, I am not at all surprized; but that the humble, the philosophical, the contented Rousseau should so far get the better of his love of solitude, & contempt of the pomps & vanities of the world, as to admit of such public attentions, is, I own, amaz-

ing. Who knows but that a turtle dinner at the 'Crown & Anchor,' with the boys hollowing & throwing squibs in the street, & St. Clement's bells half-tearing down the steeple at his first arrival, might have made England tolerable to him? The Hermitage in Derbyshire was not at all the thing; noise, bustle, popularity, seem to have always been his objects under the appearance of shunning them. He would have rejected them here, I make no doubt, & have declaimed very finely against them, but he could not bear their not being offered to him. This is certainly the truth, my Lord, & you must not be angry; great minds have often great weaknesses: I give him honour where honour is due, & I am sorry for his failings.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I asked Lord Villiers about the civil speech he made to your Lordship, but he declares absolutely that, if it was so civil as your Lordship represents & took it to be, it must have been your Lordship's own, for that he never was designedly guilty of complimenting you in his life. As to that little spice of vanity which was hinted at in my last, both he & I agreed that you must allow your friends to be better acquainted with your accomplishments than you are yourself. Your Lordship may be blind to your own perfections, or disclaim what you please through modesty, but dear friends

will pry into latent excellencies, in order to have the pleasure of publishing them to the world. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Sept. 22nd, 1767.*”

“MY LORD,—You complain of me as a correspondent without once considering that I have no green chintz night-gown with blue flowers, no French post-cap, nor am I permitted (notwithstanding the dignity of human nature) to sit whole hours by myself in my room without breeches. Besides, my poor philosophy goes no farther than an endeavour to make myself easy with men & things just as I find them, & to learn from a consciousness of my own failings to forgive those of others. The sublimer Rousseau, on the contrary, seems to have given your Lordship a receipt to be always uneasy, under the notion of dignity & independance. Man & not social is a contradiction; his only chance for happiness depends upon society.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Your Lordship had intermingled your civility to Lord Jersey so exceedingly with your abuse on his relations that I mentioned to him neither the one nor the other. I could not disentangle them, so that you may say obliging things in your next by way of excuse for not coming hither, without taking any notice that I had mentioned

the subject. I hardly know whether your dignity & independance can stoop to such artifice, but I know it is very harmless. I am much obliged to Lady Nuneham for her compliments, & beg mine may be made acceptable in return. I hope her Ladyship has escaped the contagion of Rousseauism; for myself I would rather have the influenza again, ten to one. When I say all this, your last letter gave both Lord Villiers & myself great entertainment. We did smile, as you supposed we would, at the exaggerated pictures you drew of your own mind & feelings, & saw you in all your dignity a perfect demigod in dishabille. You have probably long before this time descended from the clouds, & a mere mortal may venture to tell you that he is, . . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*“Middleton Park, Sept. 30th, 1767.”*

“MY LORD,—I most sincerely congratulate you on the account you give of yourself in your letter of last night; but is it Rousseau who has taught you to feed the hungry & cloath the naked? I fancy you might have found a greater guide, whose example was purer, & whose precepts are conveyed in the shortest and clearest manner. This same philosophy has fairly duped you into being a Christian, & you are actually following the tenets of the Gospel without seeming to attend to it. Go on, & prosper!

“One piece of pride you have relapsed into, which I think it my duty to admonish you of. I remember the time when humility & Voltaire instructed you to always make use of the little i when you wrote about yourself, but through your whole last letter the great I stands as plain & conspicuous as the proudest of us all could have dared to have written it. This, my Lord, must be a voluntary wickedness, it cannot be a mistake so often repeated.

“I wish with all my heart the strictness of your present way of thinking had permitted you to have obliged your friends, & have gone to St. Albans. A little attention to Lord Spencer, & friendship to him & Lord Villiers, tho’ crimes, might possibly have been venial ones. There was a time when you were an admirable canvasser, & who knows but you might have been able to put on that character once more for a few days. Besides, you would have had an opportunity of giving good advice to the constituents, & taking them to advantage too, for in their cups all men are honest. I expect your Lordship’s next letter will be on the subject of plants, for I hear Rousseau’s only study at present is Botany. Your cousin will be glad of that, & improve his gardens under your direction. I am to return compliments, &c., from him to Lady Nuneham & your Lordship, & to say how glad he should have been,

& how sorry he is. You did it admirably, fie upon you!

\* \* \* \* \*

"Am not I to congratulate your Lordship upon Lady Parmerson's marriage? The papers tell me I am, as well as to condole with you upon the loss of Mons<sup>r</sup>. de Guerchy. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Nov. 8th, 1767.*

"MY LORD,— . . . The perils you went through in your journey to Derbyshire will make you unwilling to travel anywhere for the future; but what has your Lordship to do with anything but turnpike roads? Such a summer as the last has made every other road scarce passable. Even in this *fine open* country we can hardly get a mile from home, & the very park itself looks as if we were in Lincolnshire.

"Your most obliged & most obedient,

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, February 7th, 1768.*

"MY LORD,—Twice did I call at Cavendish-square to inform your Lordship of my intended flight to Bath, & twice was I disappointed. I am gotten hither, however, & find great benefit, as usual, from the waters. I am lodged in the market-place, have a spacious first-floor, and can chuse



my dinner from the windows of my best room, & the sauce to it from the gallery, which looks into the herb-market. How commodious! I have no more noise than I like, & a constant moving picture whenever I chuse to take notice of it; in short, I am in that best of situations, alone in a crowd. You will say, perhaps, it is a crowd of ragamuffins, what then? they wear the human face divine, & those of the fair sex, who attend with baskets, are as busy & as industrious as the men.

“The sight of so much raw meat, & bleeding salmon so delightfully handled, will, I hope, cure my squeamish stomach of its delicacy. I think I could almost skin a rabbit myself already; what I may arrive at in a fortnight more it is impossible for me to guess. The ball rooms (another kind of shambles) I have not yet entered; the play-houses I have attended the only two nights they have played since I was here.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The news here is that Lord Harcourt is married, or will certainly be married in a few days, to Mrs. Dashwood. I am thought rather cautious and reserved in not declaring that I know it for a fact. What would you have me say? My best respects always attend Lady Nuneham, & I have the honour to be, . . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*"Grosvenor-square, June 23rd, 1768.*

"AND so, my Lord, you are already tired of Nuneham, because it is the country? fie upon you! what would you have done if you had been a Mahometan, & obliged, after death, to go to Paradise for ever? you richly deserve it. I suppose your objection of adding a strawberry-leaf to your coronet is for fear it should look a little too like a garden; fie upon you again. However, I will give you some comfort before I conclude my answer to the splenetic part of your letter, which is this, that you will probably have the satisfaction of lessening your estate, but never be wicked enough to add one single dirty acre to it. Your ancestors are unluckily out of your reach, but you may make some of their posterity run naked about the woods, & eat acorns for subsistence. That, your Lordship sees, will be reducing them to a natural state, as far as is in your power, & the pleasing prospect of it may play about your heart, even amidst the pomp and vanity of your present enjoyments.

"I shall certainly pay you a visit at Astrop, which I take to be a very tolerable place. All the *gentry* of our part of the county frequent it very much, & talk of the public breakfasts, & the morning balls, as things of some consequence. Besides, if I remember, it is not at all like the country; at least, I am sure it has not the small-

est resemblance of Nuneham, except that Mr. Wills's canal is water, & so is the Thames. I beg no reflections upon Lady Say; your great grandfather would not have treated her so rudely. Lord Say, likewise, was my school-fellow, & drew all his knowledge from the same fountain of literature. He talks classical learning to me every time I meet with him. You will be very happy in their acquaintance, though they are not, in every respect, in a state of nature. She would make a sweet figure in the woods, he would only look like a faun.

"After all this nonsense I will tell your Lordship a serious truth: Polly Smelt is going to be married immediately, & not to our friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Lady Nuneham does me honour in her reproach, but I thought I *was* acquainted with her Ladyship as much as I can possibly be acquainted with a fine young lady whom I see so seldom. It requires a great deal more intercourse before I can be half so rude to her as I am to your Lordship; but I will endeavour to mend. In the meantime her Ladyship will, I hope, accept of my respects & compliments till I am on a proper footing to treat her with neither.

"I find Lord Harcourt's French expedition is delayed by the Colonel's being detained in Ireland. I wish your Lordship joy of your horse; use it very

often, keep it dull, & don't let your grooms teach it tricks. I hope you have your French great coat still to ride in, as well as your French post-cap *à la* Chudleigh. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, July 7th, 1768.*”

“MY —,—You see how well I obey your —,—ship's commands. I will say no more on that head than what I would tell Rousseau to his face,—

“Honour & shame from no condition rise ;  
Act well your part, there all the honour lies.

“If you had had the happiness of being born a scavenger you could have been no more than a good man at best, & that you may be, if you please, in your present humiliating situation. I say nothing of larger duties & wider spheres, because they are the cant of depravity ; but if one has those wretched things belonging to one, why one must make the best of them.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The Laurustinus, the Arbutus, the Bays, & some of the Laurels, are just as much destroyed here as those on the terrace at Nuneham ; everything else is very flourishing. I am more natural than you are, for I find I love the country very much, & have not even a thought that straggles

to London, tho' it rains at this instant abominably.  
O Nature, Nature! as M<sup>rs</sup>. Clive says in the  
play. . . .

"I have the ——— to be,

"My ——

"Your ——ship's most —— &

"most ————

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Oct. 4th, 1768.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . Has your Lordship heard  
anything of Mason? I see they have put his epi-  
taph in the newspaper, & that he has not altered  
the two exceptionable lines: the lover prevailed  
over the critic. I should have preferred, which I  
told your Lordship at Nuneham, the plainness of  
the following lines:—

"Bid her be chaste, be innocent like thee ;

Bid her in duty's sphere as meekly move ;

Bid her, tho' fair, from vanity be free,

Be firm in friendship, & be fond in love.

"But perhaps I am as partial to my alteration  
as he is to his original stanza. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Oct. 23rd, 1768.*

"MY LORD,— . . . How terribly you complain of what is the best thing imaginable in the country, a house full of company. It is the only thing which gives one time to one's self, & makes everybody easy. It does not signify what the company consists of; a little general civility makes the whole sociable, & you may pick out the parts as you please for private amusement. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, March 28th, 1769.*

"MY LORD,— . . . I congratulate your Lordship that, amidst all your disgusts at the vices of the rest of the world, you should have been so happy as to find out one immaculate friend, the Duchess of Kingston! I really think her myself a perfect character, & am glad Lord Bristol had a favour to shew as well as your Lordship. The Court, they tell me, was very full, & so were the streets. They could not all go to laugh & sneer, some, I dare say, shook their heads very sincerely. Now you are angry, & therefore I change the subject. My end is answered; a little warmth now & then is good for your constitution. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bath, Aug. 3rd, 1769.*

"MY LORD,— . . . I came to Bath with Lord Jersey for a fortnight, & three weeks of that fortnight have very near expired, & I hear nothing of our return to Middleton, but I presume I shall in a few days.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You are hasty in your judgement concerning Gray's Ode. He is accused of flattery, I think he has dextrously avoided it; he could not possibly have said less out of gratitude; a friend of ours said a great deal more when he had no obligations. Surely the introducing all those founders & foundresses of colleges in Cambridge, who may be called the D. of Grafton's relations, was rather happy. You must not (like a critic in the newspaper whom I have laughed at) be ignorant who Anjou's heroine & the paler rose were. As to Betty Clare, I am bound to defend her: she founded the college I belonged to; & poor Chatillon, the Countess of Pembroke, foundress of Gray's own college, must be pitied by every one. She was a near relation of Edward the Third's, of the family of Blois, daughter of Guy de Chatillon, Count de St. Pauly, third wife to Aymer de Valences, Earl of Pembroke, who was killed in a tilting match the very morning of his marriage. You see I go to genealogy to bring you over. I say nothing of old Margaret, Henry the Seventh's



mother, tho' she was both a Plantagenet and a Tudor, because I am uncertain whether your politics attach you most to the red or white rose of those times : old Margaret was blood-red ; I should think you are for one *paler rose*, which poor lady (whom Gray mentions before) you have seen Mrs. Pritchard act very often, & take leave of her children most pathetically. The bold Margaret of Anjou you have only seen represented by Mrs. Yates, & you are partial. *Old Margaret*, the Countess of Richmond, has, I believe, never been upon the stage. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Grosvenor-square, Aug. 30th, 1769.*

“MY LORD,—I am in a good deal of confusion & hurry, but cannot help stealing a moment to acquaint your Lordship with the melancholy event of the death of Lord Jersey. The present Lord desires his love to you, but is too much embarrassed at this time to be able to write even a line to you himself. I came from Bath yesterday, where I went thro' a scene of three days which made me nervous, & undid almost all the waters had done for me. I hope we shall get out of Town to Middleton to-morrow, & have a few days' rest. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

" *Grosvenor-square, Sept. 10th, 1769.*

"MY LORD,— . . . I shall probably be at Middleton some time in this week to inspect letters & papers; an office Mr. Vernon & myself are desired to undertake, tho' the office itself is not a pleasant one.

"Everything upon earth is left to the present Lord, but with restrictions which he did not deserve, but not more than we expected. But these things I must talk over with you. I want to know when it will be agreeable to you for me to spend a few days with you at Nuneham, or whether it will be so at all any time before the winter? I say this with a *proviso* that Lord Jersey does not want me.

"I have been so many years shut out from every kind of connection but one, that I am exceedingly awkward, & do not know how to behave in my present situation. I find myself so totally at home both here & at Middleton that they seem new places to me; but this is *entre nous*. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

" *Briton Ferry, Oct. 12th, 1769.*

"MY LORD,—I am much obliged by your very kind & entertaining letter; it is so like the conversation she & you occasionally have together, when wit is tinctured with a little lively malice,

that I could not help shewing it to Mr<sup>s</sup>. Vernon. . . .

“Your Lordship’s, &c.,  
“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Mount-street, June 25th, 1770.*

“MY LORD,—You are possibly by this time quite tired with finding fault with Nuneham, & abusing Nature for having scattered her wood, & her lawn, & (fie upon her) her water, in such a manner as she has done about you. The rooms, too, should have been all looking-glass, & not have had their walls defiled with blotches of pictures upon the damask. Domenichino may do very well in a *boudoir*, or Ruysdale<sup>k</sup> in a water-closet; but nothing beyond a *dessus des portes* should enter into an apartment of real elegance. The prints, too, in your dressing-room do not hang right, tho’ you have altered them three or four times already; several of them ought to be in oval frames, but how can that be done in the country? Nothing can be done in the country. Curse the country! &c., &c.

“If this be your Lordship’s state of mind at present, a letter from London may not be amiss, tho’ I would have you take notice that I, tho’ not the mover, begin the correspondence.

“Your friend Lady Jersey has wanted a great

<sup>k</sup> Ruysdaal.

deal of scolding since you left Town ; she must needs be a driver as well as a rider. The horses ran away with her in one of the little chaises at Wimbledon, & she was obliged to throw herself out of it to avoid being drowned. This fright has, I hope, cured her ; I wish she would learn prudence of Lady Nuneham.

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“They are to be very musical this summer, two pianofortès & an harpsicord have loaded one waggon already ; we likewise are to be very musical at Middleton. You see, therefore, how necessary it is for me to attend the Opera. I wish I had thought of it sooner ; I have almost forgotten what I learned in Italy, & my voice is not half so good as it was then. I have altered, however, already an old song of mine upon Music & Beauty, & have sent it to a lady. I will fill up the remainder of this paper with it, but you must not let it be copied :—

“Of Music & of Beauty’s power  
     I doubted much, & doubted long ;  
 The fairest face, a gaudy flower,  
     An empty sound, the sweetest song.

“But when her voice Clarinda rais’d,  
     And sang so sweet, & smiled so gay,  
 At once I listen’d, & I gaz’d,  
     And heard, & look’d my soul away.

“To her, of all his beauteous train,  
This wond’rous power had love assign’d,  
A double conquest to obtain,  
And cure at once the deaf & blind.—*Da Capo.*

“Respects, compliments, &c.,  
“W. W.”

“*Mount-street, June 30th, 1770.*

“MY LORD,—Tho’ I have but this instant received your Lordship’s very entertaining, tho’ satirical, letter (which you know I hate), I must say a word or two immediately. The devil is in me, you will say, for writing, but it is merely to inform you that I cannot leave London till Wednesday; I will take my chance of calling at Nuneham. If you should be gone to Blenheim, why I must stay all night till you come home; & if you should not, why I may probably stay all night likewise; but I shall undoubtedly dine early, on cold meat, at Henley. I never eat so well as at an inn, in that *en passant* manner, as Mason would say; I have there no *ennui*.

“At the same time with your Lordship’s letter I receive one from Lord Jersey. *He* has forgot something, & *she* has forgot something, & I am to send *this*, & to bring *that*: Lord bless them, they are both very young, but they are absolute turtles at present. I send the plan of the skittle-ground by this very post.

"I was with Miss Fauquier yesterday morning, who gives a good account of you, I mean of your Lordship, for Lady Nuneham's propriety of behaviour I never doubt. I hope I shall find Dr. Hoare with you, for, as I have been a university man, I long to get to the bottom of that interesting affair with regard to round & square caps, tippets, & copes, things which *old* Homer, *old* Horace, never dreamed of, tho' the former knew a good deal of black puddings & sausages. You have got into an idle way of ridicule, & laugh at serious things; I am sorry for you, I wish, as you seem to desire, that he would flatter you as I do. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 23rd, 1770.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . We wanted you all very much on Monday last at Ditchley, where the maid who shewed the house in the absence of the housekeeper, had the tone & manner of the man who shews the tombs. Lady Jersey, fie upon her, began giggling as soon as the poor girl spoke, & put her quite out of her narration. She recovered, however, pretty well, & we got through Sr. Charles Rubens's wife, the picture that came from Pontius, & a few others, tolerably, but when we came to a ceiling which the

young woman assured us was *paper misshée*, I was obliged to leave the room, because I would not be a witness of so much ill-behaviour; in short her Ladyship must never go to Dr. Bacon's. At Lord Shrewsbury's she behaved better, which, by the by, is a very fine place, & I am glad I have seen it. There is a good deal of Miss Sheè's paper there, but her name was not mentioned. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Mount-street, Dec. 20th, 1770.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### POLITICS.

"Lord Weymouth has certainly resigned (tho' not till yesterday morning). Lord Sandwich succeeds him, & Mr. Thynne has kissed hands for Postmaster-General. The resignation is merely occasioned by a difference of opinion with regard to measures which he was to execute & be answerable for without approving them. What! (I hear your Lordship say, whilst Miss Fauquier applauds, & Lady Nuneham only smiles at you both,) What! are there measures which Lord W. would not undertake? & is Lord Sandwich to be called in to do their dirty work for them? I wish Mr. Sawbridge was made Secretary of State, who has a proper head for business, & Mrs. Macaulay Post-



mistress, for then one might write treason in letters all over England, & not be impertinently called to an account for it. I could say a great deal more of politics, but I will die before I will betray the good cause.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"Lord Weymouth neither is Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, nor ever thought of it. I fancy the present one must try to extricate himself out of the difficulties he has brought himself into."

*"Mount-street, Dec. 22nd, 1770.*

" . . . . . I PLAGUED you so much with politics in my last (tho' all well meant, as I dare say Miss Fauquier will agree with me) that I will not even mention the duel, nor shew how the Minden affair, at so many years' distance, has been got the better of by the drawing of a trigger. The Grecians & Romans your Lordship has been reading of so much of late did not deal in duels; they murdered & assassinated heroically, but they thought exposing themselves to any danger in defence of their country, a sober, serious, honourable thing, sage, simple, *et honnête*. . . . "

*"Middleton Park, Sept. 5th, 1771.*

"MY LORD,— . . . . How delightfully philosophical was your Lordship in your last letter! how

fond of solitude, & how *very, very* kind to the human species! indeed I might plead that as one reason why I did not write sooner, for you know I am always tender of breaking in upon your meditations. By this time you have probably had interruption enough, & a letter, w<sup>ch</sup> may be torn before it is half read, may be less teizing than a flow of conversation w<sup>ch</sup> your extreme complaisance always obliges you to listen to. . . .”

“*Mount-street, Oct. 26th, 1771.*

“ . . . . As to news, Miss Grenville is certainly to be married to S<sup>r</sup>. Watkin Williams Wynne. She made her conquest in Wales, & everything is agreed upon. Lord & Lady Temple, & Miss Stapylton, concurring. This is what is called a great match, &, I hope, will be a happy one.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Your old woman still was in my head, but in a very different style from anything you have yet received, &, as it is not written down, may possibly never be finished. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“ . . . . THE Farming Woods party, you know, was put off on account of Lord Spencer's gout, but a new party for Althorpe sprung out of its ashes, which likewise is hitherto prevented by a return

of gout, & the Middleton Lord & Lady have been Adam & Eveing it for above a fortnight without my being able to go to them. If they are to do the same a fortnight longer, & I have desired categorical answers, I shall probably go to Middleton as soon as M<sup>r</sup>. Wright leaves Town, & from thence for three weeks to Bath, if I find I cannot do without it. If Bath should not be necessary, when I leave Middleton I shall come directly to Nuneham, & stay with you 'till you tell me it is proper I should depart; nay, if I do go to Bath, I will still spend a fortnight at least with you before you go to Town.

“As to the inscription, I am answered by what your Lordship says. I have only some snatches of it in my head, & want a little conversation with you before I can bring it into form, because I would have it exactly what you yourself would wish. . . . .

“W. W.”

“*Mount-street, Nov. 11th, 1771.*”

“ . . . . I DARE say you are impatient about the inscription for the Urn<sup>1</sup>, & will therefore ask your opinion whether I have hit your meaning. After saying you have placed the funeral urn in a gay scene, I give these reasons for it.

<sup>1</sup> Placed in the garden at Nuneham to the memory of Lady Palmerston.

" *Here* shall our ling'ring footsteps oft be found ;  
This is *her* shrine, & consecrates the ground :  
*Here* living sweets around her altar rise,  
And breathe perpetual incense to the skies.  
*Here*, too, the thoughtless & the young may tread,  
Who shun the drearier mansions of the dead,—  
May *here* be taught what worth the world has known ;  
Her wit, her sense, her virtues, were her own ;  
To her peculiar ; — & for ever lost  
To those who knew, & therefore lov'd her most !

" O, if kind pity steal on Virtue's eye,  
Check not the tear, nor stop the useful sigh ;  
From soft humanity's ingenuous flame  
Some wish may rise to emulate *her* fame.  
May some faint image of *her* worth restore,  
When those who now lament her are no more.

" You see I go upon conjecture of your intention,  
& you must set me right if I err. A short prose  
inscription, *to the memory*, &c., will be a necessary  
introduction. Only tell me your own wishes, & I  
will endeavour to conform to them.

" I give you joy on the Dss. of Cumberland.  
Why do they run away to France ? It has occa-  
sioned great disturbance both at St. James's & Carl-  
ton House ; & how it will end I cannot well con-  
ceive. The Dss. of Gloucester must be acknow-  
ledged too. . . .

" W. W."

*" Mount-street, June 12th, 1772.*

"YOUR Lordship seems to have given me up as a correspondent, yet, notwithstanding the decorum of the first mover, &c., I cannot refrain from condoling with your Lordship on the two melancholy events of Ireland and the laundry<sup>m</sup>. The first you will bear as a philosopher, & the second has some degree of merriment attending it. The ladies of the washing-tub will certainly consider your garden as their drying-ground, & will frequently chant out to the tune of Owen Tudor,—

" 'Our Lines shall grace Laburnums,  
Since such our masters will it.  
And our smaller things  
Shall dangle on strings  
From Tuberose tops & Lillies ;'

& perhaps add to it, with a still farther regard to their profession,—

" 'No more in our chests of linen  
Shall Lavender reign despotic,  
We'll cull our flowers  
From yonder bowers,  
And our smocks shall smell exotic.'

"How pleased you will be to hear them! especially if they have tolerable voices, for you love music.

<sup>m</sup> This alludes to the dislike which Lord Nucham had of going to Ireland, where his father, Lord Harcourt, was Lord Lieutenant; and to his having built a laundry adjoining the flower-garden.

"I intend to do myself the honour of hearing & seeing your distresses in the middle of next week, in my way to Middleton. Wednesday is the day I propose to leave London, if my knights will permit it, & I shall probably have the honour of lying that night at Nuneham; if anything prevents it you shall hear from me again.

"The reports in Town are, that Lord Harcourt has desired Sr. George Macartney should continue Secretary (very courtly & obliging). Others say that Jenkinson is to be the person, & that he has demurred a little, but consented. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Stowe, July 11th, 1772.*

"I HOPE neither of your Lordship's two visits will happen on next Wednesday, as I propose having the honour of dining with you that day, certainly being with you in the evening. I am at present at Stowe, & am to sup in the illuminated grotto; Lord & Lady Coventry, Lord & Lady Jersey, & Prince Poniatowski are here. You see, my punctilio, I will not venture to come to you without notice, tho' it be ever so short a one. There's good breeding!

"I intend passing a few days with Quiet and her sister<sup>n</sup> whilst the boistrous are revelling at

<sup>n</sup> Alluding to some lines of Marvel, on a bench in the grounds at Nuneham.

Wakefield and Barford. Your not coming to Middleton is laid entirely upon me, for mentioning company & the natives in my letters ; so take notice, for the future I shall never say anything on that head, I shall confine myself entirely to that pleasing subject, myself.

“My best respects, &c., always attend Lady Nuneham.”

*“Middleton Park, July, 1772.*

“... So kind have the natives been that this is the first day I have dined with Lord and Lady Jersey alone. They are both perfectly well, & very much employed about making a dog-kennel, & digging earths to invite foxes to make Middleton their abode. Some disturbances will probably attend their labours in the long run, & I may have new Chevy Chases to write in the beginning of the winter. Lady Jersey is an arrant little tigress upon the subject, & even trimmings & contreband caps are but little thought of.

“I ride every morning, & have an excellent horse ; I even galloped to-day, in order to be pretty company.

“Why will Lord & Lady Nuneham not come to Middleton ? is a question I have put to me every day. What answer shall I give them ?

“I saw a very fine ivy-leaved geranium at Lady Dashwood’s on Sunday last. I think your



Lordship likewise has one,—at least I declared you had, because I would not let it be supposed that your garden was not furnished with everything. An all-spice plant is also there in full blow, as is ours at Middleton, but I cannot praise the beauty of either of them : it is a brown pompadour-coloured flower like a columbine. This garden is not in high bloom, but there is one shrub I never saw before, which is a *Coronilla with purple flowers*. Your *Coronillas*, & those which are here besides, have yellow flowers, like their cousin the Scorpion Senna. Our *Pyreonthas* are wonderfully full of blossoms.

“I have this evening read Chambers’s book on gardening quite through ; it seems to be three blue beans in a blue bladder, &c. He must be a charming coxcomb upon the whole. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.

“P.S. I have heard such lectures lately from adepts in the science that I could write a fox-hunter’s part in a comedy.”

“*Middleton Park, August 15th, 1772.*

“ . . . . THE family here, & the family at Stowe, are much out of humour with you, & call you odd, capricious, whimsical, & a thousand hard names which I do not chuse to repeat. All I can say in your defence (& your Lordship knows I defend very well) has but little effect. Lady Nuneham

they all speak well of, and indeed *con amore*: they are sure she was not the least in fault; her real good nature and amiable disposition would have put itself to any inconvenience rather than have deprived others of the happiness of her company. But for her Lord——”

“*Middleton Park, Sept. 30th, 1772.*

“.... SINCE my return to Middleton I have seen Voltaire's new verses *Sur les Systèmes*. The scheme might have been a good one if he had treated it more elaborately and more seriously, & had condescended to have been less familiar with the Deity; as it is, it did not answer my expectations. It is said in Scripture that in the latter days there shall be no faith upon earth; Mons<sup>r</sup>. Voltaire seems to have the misfortune to be the great Apostle of that *no faith*.

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Middleton Park, Aug. 19th, 1773.*

“... NOTWITHSTANDING the badness of the day I fulfill my promise, & with infinite pleasure inform Lord and Lady Nuneham that Lady Jersey was safely delivered of a *son* this morning, a little before three o'clock. Her Ladyship & Lord Villiers are, according to the phrase, as well as can be expected. Lord Jersey, I believe, writes himself.

"Lady Charlotte Villiers (whose nose, poor thing, did not want to be put out of joint) hopes Lady Nuneham will still retain some degree of affection for her."

*"Mount-street, Oct. 16th, 1773.*

".... NOW, then, you are on Irish ground, under the protection of St. Patrick, & have left all venomous creatures with poor us in England to goad & sting us 'till your return; I dare say, whatever apprehensions of novelty you carried with you, you will find much amusement & enjoyment amongst a good-natured people. Politicks, to be sure, are the Devil, but I hope even the sting of that great metaphorical serpent may, by proper means, be rendered pointless.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It has been the study of my life, however, to learn to be able to live alone; & I find the use of that study still more & more as that life advances. I do not mean that I was ever an enemy to society. Some society I always did, & always shall, love extremely; but what I guarded against was the making the mere commerce of the world absolutely necessary to me; *en passant* 'tis agreeable enough, & I can make it amusing.

"I have no news to tell you. You have doubtless heard the whole history of the D. of Kingston's will. Your friend the Duchess has now an

opportunity of marrying A. H. in the face of the world, tho' I rather think she will retire to Dresden to her dear Electress, & die a Catholic.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Lady Charlotte Edwyn is very averse to Miss Keck's marriage with Lord Hereford. When the young lady asked the Queen's consent to marry, her Majesty graciously told her that her approbation would certainly attend everything that could make Miss K. happy, but she was sorry to find that what she mentioned was not quite agreeable to some of Miss K.'s best friends, & wished it was in her power to bring about a reconciliation. 'May I tell my aunt what your Majesty is graciously pleased to say?' 'To be sure, Miss K., if it will be of any service to you.' Upon this she immediately carried to her aunt the Queen's *commands* to be reconciled. This roused the Hamilton blood, & the ferment is not yet allayed. This piece of intelligence is for Lady Nuneham, tho' probably she may have heard it before.

"There is a rumour that somebody of the Pierpont family lays in a claim of male heirship, & that it may cause a dispute with her Grace. It is said to be a servant of Lord Guernsey's, or a father of that servant; this, too, may be a lie. I hope everything goes smoothly in Ireland, &

that his Excellency meets with as little trouble as possible. . . .

“Adieu, my dear Lord,  
“W. W.”

“*Bath, Nov. 15th, 1773.*

“. . . . I SAW the Garrick of Bath last night in Othello, for the first time, indifferent enough in conscience, very like coachey & cookey in high life below stairs. He seems to have studied the Negro language amongst the black servants at Bristol, & is full as vulgar. . . .

“Addio,  
“W. W.”

“*Bath, Dec. 6th, 1773.*

“I WAS just going to write to your Lordship when I had the pleasure of your letter, for the distance we are at, attended likewise with winds & tides, will not admit of a regular question & answer correspondence.

“I am still at Bath, tho’ my month is just out, & shall, I believe, make it a six weeks’ campaign. The manner in which I live in this place (for I would not live an absolute Bath life on any consideration) is very agreeable to me, & the waters are always of service. If propriety & convenience would admit, I should not dislike staying here the whole winter, &, perhaps, every winter, if I

could make it my home, & have my books & everything about me.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Duchess of Kingston is determined Bath shall not leave off talking of her; she is gone abroad, but has just sent hither to Hoare the painter to draw a full-length picture of her in weeds, with her dear Duke standing by her. There is already at Hoare's a full-length picture of her Grace in coronation-robcs, with the Duke, in miniature, in one corner of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I am glad to find Lady Nuneham attends Parliament. I know she can carry a bill through the House of Commons in England, & who knows what she may effect in her present situation in Ireland. . . .

"Adieu, my Lord,  
"W. W."

*"Mount-street, Dec. 24th, 1773.*

". . . I WANT your Lordship very much in London to consult about an enamel'd case for Miss Sanderson's watch. Their own design was an Apollo, a Minerva, & God knows who, but the enamel was ruined by the fire. They now desire I would superintend it, & propose what alterations I chuse. A finely-executed naked Venus was proposed by the painter, but re-

jected with disdain; the artificer is Parker, in Panton-street, but I have not yet called, nor shall be able now till I return from the Grove. The Minerva, I apprehend, must be there, but I shall judge better when I have seen the design: I am determined to admit of no nudities. What think you of *Old Time* presenting a wreath of flowers to *Youth*, whilst she is taking him by the forelock? It is for a watch, you know, & for a young lady.

"I have made two most horrible blots, but it is impossible to write *nothing* over twice, & therefore your Lordship must excuse it. . . .

"W. W."

"*Mount-street, Grosvenor-square,*  
*Jan. 18th, 1774.*

"... THE Jersey family is now settled in Town, the little boy christened for the second time, & her Ladyship looking very handsome, & beginning her gambols. I dined with them yesterday at Lord Edgecombe's.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Lady Jersey desires me to tell Lady Nuneham that she meant to have written to her yesterday, but a birthday is so perplexing a thing, when one's trimming is not quite ready, that it was impossible to attend to anything else. She is to-day all over ducks' feathers, green and gold, faintly shin-



ing upon red silk. I told her she seemed to me in second mourning, but it is called vastly elegant, & indeed the stomacher, robings, &c., with diamonds upon them, looked extremely well. The flounces on the petticoat had only the appearance of dyed ermine. Her head, however, was extremely well drest, & I was treated with contempt for my occasional censures upon other parts. None of these fancy-dresses ever look new to me; I like a fine shining silk that declares to every body it is just come fresh from Spital-fields; has never tasted the taint of salt water, or even been soiled in a Custom-house. Lady Nuneham will forgive me.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Miss Sanderson’s watch is still in debate; the pictures are too small for telling an allegorical story. I have taken the liberty, however, of adding an olive branch to Minerva, alluding to the old story:—

“‘Thus Pallas with her javelin smote the ground,  
And peaceful olives flourish’d from the wound.’

“I could not find a Hebe to my fancy, & have therefore given them a Herculeum figure for the middle compartment.

“Had my idle idea taken place, I should certainly have written verses on the occasion, which, by the by, Miss Sanderson must not have seen.

I think *Time* might naturally have said, whilst she was *patting* his forelock,—

“In my situation some gods would grow fond,  
But I'm old, & resign'd to my fate ;  
Yet stretch, my dear Hebe, one finger beyond,  
And, prithee now, scratch my bald pate.’

\* \* \* \* \*

“Lord Chesterfield's letters, I am told, will not do him any credit with thinking people ; they are not yet published. The present Lord Lyttelton, too, has given his cousin, Captain Ascough, a great collection of his father's juvenile trifles, which, I hear, had better be suppressed. I have seen none of them ; Lord Chesterfield should have died a great nominal wit, & nothing should be published of Lord Lyttelton but what is perfect & correct. But needy people will sell, & booksellers will buy, any remains of celebrated characters. We shall see what they are when they come forth. . . .”

“*Mount-street, Feb. 9th, 1774.*

“... IT is certainly true that Dr. Dod attempted to bribe Lady Apsley to get the living of St. George's for him from the Chancellor. He is already struck off the Chaplains' list, & another appointed in his place ; so abhorrent is the Court of all Simoniacal affairs. . . .”

" *Mount-street, Feb. 23rd, 1774.*

"... THE postscript to the epistle to Sir W. Chambers is certainly by the same hand as the former. The subject does not admit of such variety of fancy as the last, but there are excellent ironical impertinent strokes in it; & it ought to be considered as a postscript merely. It is, in its way, just as well written.

"Your other correspondents must send you accounts of the House of Commons, & Charles Fox, & Parson Horne, &c., for I will not, at this distance, retail either politicks or scandal. You have, I dare say, enough of both on your side the water.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Lady Jersey is going to-night to a ball at Lord Gordmanstown's, but it is the etiquette not to be over drest any more than a proper regard to one's person requires. All the *bon ton* go to it, but it is, nevertheless, to be treated with a kind of *nonchalance*: this, among inferior beings, would be translated *impertinence*; but I bow with reverence to the resolutions of supreme authority. . .

"W. W."

" *Mount-street, March 26th, 1774.*

"... J'AI vu le chateau de Bingley. If you have bought it, Helas! — if not, hola! — it is the strangest & least habitable house of any I ever saw.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Memoirs of Mr. Gray will probably make their appearance in May next.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Jersey family are on the brink of a resolution to inoculate their two girls. The lady of that house has raked herself into being very thin, & not at all well, but still goes on. The doctor & the dance succeed each other, for every body dances now, at every assembly, & every night. A royal christening, the opera, & Almacks afterwards, in one night, nothing but female delicacy could possibly undergo.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have got thus far without once congratulating you on Lady Georgina Spencer's match<sup>o</sup>. Every body here seems delighted with it, & I hope he will deserve her. Lady Jersey & Lady Clermont are quite in their element; they are the projectors, buyers, & supervisors of all the wedding cloaths & trinkets.

"Miss Sanderson's watch is finished, & sent away without my seeing it. . . . "W. W."

*"Mount-street, April 23rd, 1774.*

"I WAS determined not to write to your Lordship till I had again seen Bingley House<sup>p</sup>, with-

<sup>o</sup> She was daughter of Lord Spencer, and married the Duke of Devonshire.

<sup>p</sup> Afterwards called "Harcourt House," in Cavendish-square.

out the incumbrance of crowds & auctioneers. I had that satisfaction the other day, with Lord & Lady Jersey & Mr. Stenhewer only. I like it better, because I saw more rooms than I did before. The lower floor, with a good deal of trouble, & at a very great expense, may be made a very fine one, tho' there is no very striking room in it. Your gallery, with its closet & trap-door staircase, will want much alteration. Lady Nuneham will have two good rooms above stairs; the rest of the family must breathe as they can. The court has a bastile magnificence, & the garden may have its agremens for Filon, coquette, &c.; but I will dwell no longer on this subject, as, I dare say Lord Jersey has sent you his opinion much more explicitly.

“The young ladies in Grosvenor-square were this morning inoculated; I have not seen them, nor shall, I presume, till they are well. You are certainly right, I am in a monstrous fidget, but I conceal it admirably, & only teize myself at home. It will be a lying-in to me till it is over, for I am fond of them both; yet even that fondness I never dare shew, because I am said to spoil them.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Pray don't forget to be able to live alone. I live so much alone myself that I want somebody to keep me in countenance. Not that I

would advise the really doing it to your station & time of life, but the being able to do it can have no harm in it. You will hear so much of Lord Chesterfield's letters that I will say nothing of them ; but when I see you, and have read them thoroughly, I will give you my opinion. Many parts of them which relate to people now living, & which contain very profligate advice to a son, should, undoubtedly, never have been printed. But I have seen them only by snatches ; it is called, by some people, a perfect system of education. Dr. Johnson, I am told, in his coarse way, says, it is the morality of a common woman, with the breeding of a dancing-master. They seem well written as to stile ; & I have read several very good letters. . . .

“W. W.”

“*Mount-street, May 27th, 1774.*

“... MASON is here, & will, I hope, not have left us till you come. His Celestinette is the most agreeable music I ever heard, & he is himself delightfully out of tune, & most entertainingly discontented ; I have not seen him these three or four days, as he has been in a course of dowagers, but he returns to-night from that antiquated connection. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

"*Birkin, July 1st, 1774.*

"... DO you know what is become of Mason ? As to the Jerseys, I dare say you will inform me how their health goes on ; I am very uneasy till she gets better. From your Lordship I shall have less flattering accounts than from herself, & less desponding ones than from Lord Jersey ; she is an absolute martyr to *bon ton*. I need use no worse expression.

"What new additions are there to Lord Lyttleton's works, & what is Voltaire's *Taureau Blanc* ? Consider I am two hundred miles from London, & am therefore privileged to ask questions. As a convincing proof that I am so far from the metropolis, there is a young woman to do pennance in the church next Sunday ; barbarous & Gothic ! It is only her second offence. In London they err seventy & seven times, & are forgiven. The church-wardens want to have her stand without shoes & stockings, & with her hair dishevelled, a perfect Jane Shore. To do them justice, however, it is not the crime she has committed which offends them so much, their principal complaint against her is the charge she brings upon the parish ; her Christian name is *Eleanora*. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."



“*Birkin, July 31st, 1774.*”

“... LADY JERSEY is now, I presume, under your care & directions, & you must, as her host, ‘against the murderer shut the door, nor hold the knife yourself:’ that is, in plain English, you must force her to be quiet, grow well whether she will or not, & not lead her into rakeries & vagaries. She may study botany with Walter Clarke in the flower-garden, but not scamper to balls & races; Lady Nuneham’s *prudence* in such cases may be trusted to itself.

“I am still at Birkin, & likely to remain so some time longer, for Middleton, I find, will not be Middleton till the beginning of September; I am perfectly contented, or rather more than contented, where I am; it is so like the life I enjoyed in former days (the golden age of my youth) that I seem (like the Negroes after death) to be returned to my own country again. Not but that I hanker a little after my Oxfordshire friends, & heartily wish some of them capable of tasting the quiet pleasures I at present possess.

“My last sentence is prophetic, & the prophecy fulfilled, for I have this moment received a letter from Lady Jersey, in which she tells me she is making a herbal; dissecting flowers, gumming them on paper, drying plants entire, & doing everything that is mild & rural. If she had not mixed a little scandal upon her neighbours in her

innocent epistle, I should tremble for what the *bon ton* would think & say of her. That last happy foible secures her, & I am not under the least apprehension that either your Lordship or Miss Fauquier should cure her of it; I intend writing to her very soon, but I have not time this post.

"I am going to dine with Lady Ramsden, where I shall probably hear your poor friend the Duchess of Kingston rather roughly handled. I am too tender-hearted myself to say anything to your Lordship on that subject. If you can purchase her picture at Mr. Hoare's, either in widow's weeds or coronation robes, it will be a curiosity.

"Is the poem on the *Fête Champêtre* good for anything? I see Almon has published two or three editions of it; not that I would encourage scandal. If it is panegyric & well written I will venture to read it.

"I long to see your flower-garden before it is altered; if I should not come time enough, I hope Lady Jersey will preserve part of it on gummed paper. Your Lordship will be so good, tho' I know you are sparing of that commodity, to lend her half-a-quarter of a sheet for that purpose.

"My love, & service, & good wishes, & best respects, & respectful compliments, attend you all.

"W. W.

"P.S. I have not time to say anything on the daring attempt to counterfeit his Majesty's image at Leicester House, but hope you have preserved some of the halfpence. Juvenal talks of brazen statues of ministers which were melted down into frying-pans, &c., but to form monarchs of such vile kitchen stuff makes one's hair stand on end; I am sure it shocks your Lordship & Miss F."

*"London, 1774.*

"I MUST just tell your Lordship that, after passing through the crowd at Maidenhead races, I got very safe to Town between two & three o'clock. I went unluckily (Miss Fauquier will say designedly) to dine at a tavern sacred to Percy & Clinton, where, to be sure, I heard noise enough. They are horribly forward on the poll; her Grace of Northumberland goes most condescendingly out of her sphere, shakes every basket-woman by the hand, & tells them, with a sigh, that she cannot, what she wishes to do, give them meat & drink in abundance; for that, in these new-fangled times, would be bribery & corruption. The voters of Westminster have rather taken offence at Wilkes's interfering in their election: 'Let him stick to his city of London, & not presume to dictate in Covent Garden; shall they be told who they are to chuse by aliens?' in short, we want Miss Fauquier's sixpence. I saw Lord

T. Clinton come into the tavern, & he looked very lively. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“HEBE, from thy cup divine,  
Shed, O shed nectareous dew !  
Here, o’er Nature’s living shrine,  
The immortal drops diffuse ;  
Here, while every bloom’s display’d,  
Shining fair in vernal pride,  
Catch the colours e’er they fade,  
And stop the green blood’s ebbing tide,—  
Till youth eternal, like thine own, prevail,  
Safe from the night’s damp wing, & day’s insidious gale.

“Your Lordship wants inscriptions for Greek & Latin deities, & yet will not have recourse to the only languages which speak of them with propriety. I have therefore attempted the above.

“As to your Hercules, his last exploit was robbing an orchard, as the apples in his hand prove. If one did not hate far-fetched allusions, one might easily turn yours into the Hesperian garden.

“‘Hesperian gardens true,  
If true, here only.’—*Milton*.

“Then make him rest from his labours, &c., ‘quaff immortality & joy’ with his *Hebe*. But this would require a commentator to explain, & be nonsense at last.

“Horace says Faunus left his own Arcadia to

come & revel in his rural scenes at Lucretile. He might, with equal truth, come post from Lucretile to Nuneham, & still change for the better. But this, too, would be quaint & nonsensical. Inscriptions should be very apt, & very intelligible. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

“*Mount-street, Aug. 1774.*

“ . . . . . Mr. WRIGHT left me last Wednesday morning, delighted with your Lordship’s approbation of *Hebe*, because he was partial to it. He loves ideal nonsense, & pressed me very much about *Hercules & Faunus*. To oblige him I wrote a compliment to *Faunus*, or rather to *Nuneham*, which is not properly an inscription.

“ Horace says, in his 17th Ode of the first book,—

. “ ‘Velox amœnum sæpe Lucretilem  
Mutat Lycæo Faunus,’ &c.

“ I say, as you will see if you turn over,—

“ Faunus would oft, as Horace sings,  
Delighted with *his* rural seats,  
Forsake Arcadia’s groves & springs  
For soft Lucretile’s retreats.  
’Twas beauty charm’d, what wonder then,  
Enamour’d of a fairer scene,  
The changeful god should change again,  
And *here*, for ever, fix his reign.

"I could say something of *Hercules*, but I refer it to a future opportunity. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Mount-street, Nov. 1774.*

"To be beforehand with your Lordship. I have received your letter but a few minutes, & answer it directly,—nay, more, I send you a something about *Hercules*:—

"Crown'd with glory, crown'd with spoils,  
    *Here* forget thy labours past ;  
    *Here*, Alcides, close thy toils,  
    Th' Hesperian Garden be the last !

"The vision of thy early youth  
    Perplex'd thy dazzled sight ;  
    But *here*, in one exalted truth,  
    The goddesses unite ;

"*Here*, Epicurus' self, reclin'd,  
    Might prove his doctrines true,  
    And in this calm retirement find  
    PLEASURE & VIRTUE too.

"I write this short scrap in a hurry, but must add a piece of news. There is a strong report to-day, &, I believe, a true one, that the great Mr. Bradshaw shot himself this morning at his house in Audley-street. He is certainly dead."

*"Mount-street, Dec. 3rd, 1774.*

" . . . . MASON wishes much to see your Lordship in Town. He wants somebody that has foibles, both to laugh with & to laugh at. He cannot, he says, now laugh at the Court, because they have made his friend, Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Litchfield, in Dr. North's room, who goes to Worcester. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Mount-street, Dec. 16th, 1774.*

" . . . . I WAS thus far in my letter last night when Lady Jersey sent for me to sit with her ; & I read to her the greater part of the evening. The first news I heard this morning was that she was brought to bed at five o'clock of another little girl. She is just as well as usual, & the child too. It is a very little one. Lord Jersey went on Wednesday to Althorpe, not dreaming of this event till the middle of January. I find they sent an express to him immediately. Had I been there it should have been only a letter to write, as Dr. Ford & the nurse think everything safe on all sides.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Young Mr. Grenville is to be married with all expedition to Miss Nugent, Lord Clare's daughter. Mason is much pleased with the part of your Lordship's letter which regards him, & will be ready to laugh at a moment's warning ; the sooner you



give him an opportunity the better. He says he longs to see you, & desires respectful compliments, & all that, with a grave face.

"Lady Nuneham will accept of my best & kindest wishes. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

"*Mount-street.*

" . . . . I HAVE an invitation from a house near Westminster-bridge (if I chose to accept of it) to see the Regatta set out in all its splendor, which I fancy will be the best place, as Heaven knows what may happen before they reach Ranelagh, it may be Xerxes's fleet, or correspond with Gray's metaphorical description :—

" 'Proudly riding o'er the azure realm,  
&c., &c., &c., expects his evening prey.'

"I will tell you nothing of *Aurelia* till I bring it with me to Nuneham, where, as Chaucer says, we will *lift it to the bran*. . . .

"W. W."

"*Mount-street, June 15th, 1775.*

" . . . . YOU look with the eye of a fastidious master, & a critic; & if you are pleased, I make no doubt but that everything is superabundantly beautiful. I did not know that I had mentioned *or* for *and*, but I believe *or* is the best, for the

reason you give. Poor Hebe! don't let them strip her of the very little sense she has.

"I shall go on Saturday to the Grove, to meet Lord & Lady Jersey; a day or two's country air will do her Ladyship no harm, at least she will be safe from the midnight air of Vauxhall & Ranelagh. I have not seen either her or Lord Jersey since yesterday. They are at Wimbledon to-day, & to-morrow is a compleat something of breakfast & dinner at Petersham, & will probably conclude with a moonlight frolic upon the water, for fear they should not be quite tired to death.

"My best respects, &c., attend the whole Vernon family. I need not tell you what to say to Lady Nuneham. Her Ladyship's request with regard to any new edition of my poems shall certainly be complied with, but I fancy I may write another volume (if I am foolish enough) before any such phenomenon will appear. . . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, July 17th, 1775.*

"I THINK this letter to your Lordship will just hit the due medium between etiquette & ill-breeding. Etiquette would have written sooner, ill-breeding not at all, as I still propose being at Nuneham on Monday next. There's a handsome sentence to begin a letter with!

"Our stay at Oxford was about three hours; we

amused ourselves; I affronted nobody. I was a little afraid the latter might have happened, especially as Dr. Sibthorp shewed a letter on botany to Lady Jersey, which was written to his wife when she was Mrs. Mary Walter. He made many apologies to her Ladyship for the Deity being so often mentioned in it, but said at the same time it was excusable, as the writer, Dr. Dubois, was an old man, near his grave, & writing to his niece; all which seemed to imply (as the hostess says to Falstaff) that he hoped there was no occasion for Lady Jersey to think of God yet. We got to dinner at Middleton before the clock struck seven. The next day we dined at Blenheim, & on Saturday a party of country neighbours were so obliging as to dine here. This is all our little history since we left Nuneham. I begin to have my doubts of their Chatsworth party; the Duke & Duchess went to Calais with Lord & Lady Spencer, & as sudden a frolic may carry them to Spa or Paris.

“I want much to know how Lady Nuneham does, & whether your Lordship’s fancies have yet produced a real illness; it will be horribly provoking if you should be disappointed both of a sore throat & a barking, for you have two strings to your bow, &c., besides having a quiver full of maladies to draw out occasionally.

“What is become of Mr. Hamilton? he has been hoped for here some days.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Why cannot your Lordship fly over to give your opinion of this flower-garden? It would do you good, & you might call upon your doctor & apothecary at Oxford in your way, which would be an additional inducement. . . .

"W. W."

*"Mount-street.*

". . . . I STILL propose, with Mr. Hemet's permission, to be at Middleton on Saturday, but I cannot see my operator till to-morrow morning.

"I hope when I come to Nuneham next to speak tolerably plain, & to grin like Mr<sup>s</sup>. D., & to find your guineas turned into shillings.

"I saw an ode in the 'Gazetteer,' at one of the inns as I came along, which I had not time to read, but the subject suited my politics & patriotism exactly. It was a kind of triumph of the poor native Americans over both England & its colonies, & looking upon their present disturbances as Heaven's vengeance upon them for invading real genuine liberty. Your colonists are full as vicious as we are, &, I am afraid, horribly cruel & tyrannical where they dare be so.

"W. W."

*"September 10th, 1775.*

"I MUST first inform your Lordship that I found the roads, as one always does, much better than

they had been represented ; & next, that I arrived safe at Middleton, & dined exactly at four o'clock. The Lady and the children I find perfectly well ; the Lord is not quite so well as he should be, but has condescended to take a slight medicine, which I hope will remove his complaint. We dine to-day at Sr. Charles Cotterel's, & they will probably have finished all their visits before you come to Middleton ; Lady Caroline Stuart is to be here to-morrow. If you should find any body here that you do not like, it will be owing to yourself ; that is, to a want of punctuality, for they are warding off a certain family, that it may not interfere with you.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

"The airquake (for it was something of that kind) was felt, I find, at Abingdon & Oxford, as well as at Nuneham. At Middleton they had a noisy storm, but felt no shock. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Oct. 7th, 1775.*

"... YOUR friends here are just as you left them : the children perfectly well ; the Lord, as usual, rises too early, the Lady too late ; he takes too much exercise, & she too little. The place improves daily, & there is now a design in agitation of making the entrance to the park from the common in a different place, which will not be

a quarter of a mile out of the way, & have a wonderful effect; the park will look as big again, & almost everything that is tolerable in it be seen in the approach to the house. I will tell you very little of our visitors, because I do not love to be wicked upon paper; I was now & then almost angry, which is saying a great deal. The Stephens's left us on the Friday, & Lord Hyde & Co. on the Sunday, after your Lordship's departure. Since then we have been doing right things,—dining with our neighbours; & went one evening to play at cards & sup at S<sup>r</sup>. J<sup>s</sup>. Dashwood's.

“You would have been delighted yesterday to have dined with us at North Aston, where I saw the prettiest little play-house that you can conceive, which holds about fourscore audience, & has everything in miniature, even to thunder & lightning, the prompter's bell, & the scene-shifter's whistle. The scenes are painted by young M<sup>r</sup>. Bowles himself; are extremely well done, & there is a great variety of them. There is great decorum, I find, likewise observed by the actors. They are not allowed to crowd behind the scenes when they have no business there, but remain quietly in the Green-room till they are called out to their respective parts. The company is at present dispersed, but will rally again after some of them are married, some brought to bed, & some returned from their travels. I hope

we shall all be at Middleton some time or other to be able to see their performance.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Are not you sorry the Dss. of Devonshire has miscarried? She is very well, I hear, & heartily wish it may make her more prudent for the future. She has so much real & uncommon merit that she should not throw herself away.

"Adieu, mon cher Milord."

"*Birkin, July 26th, 1776.*

"YOUR Lordship's most obliging letter (a handsome beginning) gave me real satisfaction, but I was very near not receiving it at all. The boy who goes for letters unluckily cannot read, & your diminutive epistle had so scurvy an outside that he took for granted it must be a *billet doux* for one of the maids, & therefore slily delivered it to Betty. It did, however, afterwards find its way into the drawing-room, & I had many apologies from the poor boy the next morning.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Pray how is your cave lighted? for you speak of it as a large room, a little Ranalagh. I wish I could send you the hot day I am now enjoying, that Lady Nuneham & your Lordship might be perfectly sensible of its perfections. May the next three days be like the present; it is our only chance, for the dog-days begin on Tuesday.



"The companion you mention, I take for granted, was Lady C. Stuart. I wish she had called at a proper time to have seen your garden, not to say anything of the terrace & the pictures, tho' the last might possibly have given her most pleasure. Mason will be an abominable wretch if he does not call at Nuneham, & at Middleton too: but poets are odd creatures, & he one of the oddest.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

"I have had a fine acrostic of my name, title & everything, sent to me by a poetical barber at Pomfret, in which he calls me *Prince of Poets*. I presume he looks upon his Majesty as the king of poets, as well as head of the Church.

"If you can catch a leisure moment from her employment in the grotto, I beg your Lordship would make use of it in assuring Lady Nuneham of my most respectful & affectionate regards.

"N.B. The Pomfret barber is a most confounded patriot, & has satirized bribery & corruption at the Pomfret election without mercy, as his satires, which I have had the pleasure of perusing, specify.

"W. W."

"*Birkin, August 15th, 1776:*

".... I LIKE the account of your cave, but it seems grown into a temple. I hope it will be as

warm as you imagine, & that you will not be obliged to dedicate it to the goddess *Catch-cold*, the *Febris*, I presume, of the ancients.

"Your fête & pantomime entertainment must have alarmed the whole county, & put the Eclipse quite out of countenance; I long to see a 'Jackson's Journal' on the occasion. We shall have prints of it in some new edition of Plott's 'Oxfordshire,' as a rival to the Henrietta Waterworks. . . .

"W. W."

*"Mount-street, Oct. 29th, 1776.*

". . . . I FIND, instead of disliking it, you grow quite fond of Althorpe, & all the company there, & could scarce persuade yourself to leave Mr. Garrick, tho' you were engaged at Mason's. Perhaps you may have since that disliked Aston, & may now rather chuse to stay at Mr. Anson's than come to London. I heard you were at Sir W<sup>m</sup>. Lee's as I passed thro' Aylsbury. How could you force yourself from it? . . . .

"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 20th, 1777.*

". . . . I PERFORMED all my commissions at Oxford, that is, I regaled my eyes with the gateway at Christ Church, in compliance with your Lordship's commands; & in obedience to those of Lady Nuneham, I bought a bathing-cap, which is

much approved of at Middleton, where a bathing-place is preparing with all expedition. N.B. It was a hen-house yesterday morning, & joins to a temple of Cloicinæ. I could talk a great deal of nonsense on those two subjects, but I spare you.

“I know nothing yet of the jewels, but the caskets are excellently well, plump, stout, & rural. The garden is very neat, but not so full of flowers as it ought to be; the greatest improvement I have observed in it was Lady Jersey walking there this morning before breakfast, ‘Herself a fairer flower,’ &c. It was near five o’clock, to be sure, before we went to dinner yesterday, but we walked round the wood after coffee, supped at ten, & were in bed between eleven & twelve. Such regularity! I wish you would all come & share it. The garden is so much closer to the house than your own, that it would save you a great many steps, & the whole place is as silent as a Chartreuse, unless the little gabblers, or Mademoiselle La Mol, are abroad, and, I hope, might easily be sent off to the farm whither the poor cocks & hens are gone who yesterday inhabited the bathing-room; they were carried off in hampers & a cart, for the creatures would not go willingly. I need not mention that there are seats on the terrace, in the wood, & in the nursery, where ‘Clarissa’ may be read with propriety; nay, there is a hermitage

for Robertson, without either mice, toads, serpents, or horned beasts, & what is superior to all, there is a *trou madame* table. If these things do not tempt you it will be in vain for me to add that the master & mistress of Middleton would be very happy to see you, but let Lady Jersey speak for herself, for I see she has just got a frank for Lady Nuneham.

"None of the children acknowledged their Mama's picture at first sight but Lady Anne. They got off, however, by saying the head-dress deceived them, & when that is hidden they confess it like. There are a thousand reasons to make me admire it, & be fond of it.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

"I am your Lordship's & Lady Nuneham's, with a million of *et cæteras*,

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 30th, 1777.*

"..... THE Americans, very wisely, do not seem to intend to fight us if they can help it, but to tire us out. How I long to sing a song to Peace, like Mrs. Scot in Tamerlane! tho' her song, I believe, is to Sleep. But Sleep will do as well, for, as Lady Froth would say, War you know must sleep before Peace can come. 'To thee, O gentle Sleep,' &c. ....

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Mount-street, Oct. 20th, 1777.*

" . . . . IF your Lordship's friends continue with you, & Mason is added to the set, I have not the vanity to think I could add to your amusement, & am therefore easy on that head likewise. A third person, as Lady Beverley says, is sometimes useful, but a seventh or eighth cannot be of much consequence, unless he is an excellent fiddler indeed, & then he would probably put half the rest out of tune. The Bishop of Litchfield told me yesterday that he imagined Mr. Mason would be with you on the sixteenth. I may therefore venture to congratulate both your Lordship & him, on the 20th, on his safe arrival. Do not go to work with poor Nuneham too rashly; I mean practically. In idea you may do as much as you please, & as soon as you please, but take Lady H. into the consultations, for, betwixt ourselves, I have a great opinion of her prudence & her understanding.

"The Duke & Duchess of Devonshire, as Mr. Vary tells me, are both pleased, & please, at Brighthelmstone.

"The King & Queen have prayers read to them every Sunday at Buckingham House, shall I borrow their Common Prayer-book for the use of Nuneham Church? It leaves out the lessons & a very great part of the service, & there is no

sermon, nor even a *Viol de Gamba*. St. James's Chapel goes on as usual. . . .

"W. W."

"*Mount-street, Oct. 1777.*

" . . . . I AM pleased with the idea of the additions to the flower-garden, & have no doubt of the excellence of the alterations that may be intended for the park & the house, I only hope Doctress Harcourt will be present at the consultations.

"How the advices arrived I do not know, but a Gazette is expected to-night relative to Burgoyne & Arnold. But they say it is not to be out till twelve o'clock. Our private friends have nothing to do with that, which makes my public spirit less impatient. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

"*Mount-street, Nov. 8th, 1777.*

" . . . I SHOULD have been vastly happy to have been with you at Middleton, for, in spite of your Lordship's, Mr. Mason's, or Mr. Brown's taste, I have a great deal to say (in defence of it) that is very comfortable. Why will you use the word monotone? Brown, with all his excellence, is, in general, monotony itself. He makes glorious places for strangers to go to see, but I am much mistaken if the master of those places does not

soon grow tired of them, &, perhaps, finds, as Pope says, that 'he better likes a field.' This is but fair, after your abuse of a scene whose defects I know as well as any of you, tho' I do not love to see them painted in charcoal. I know its merits too, & had you seen it in July & August you would have drawn a much more favourable picture. . . . .

"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, July 1st, 1778.*

" . . . . . BY your Lordship's account of yourself you are doing nothing in London but what might be as commodiously done in the country, amidst the fragrance of Nuneham. Why, therefore, do you linger in heat, & dust, & stench? I hope you sometimes call upon M<sup>rs</sup>. Hardinge, & water the sprouts of her politics; tho' I do not wish that either of you may be able to bring about an invasion or a rebellion. The theory may be very amusing, but the reality might be attended with disagreeable consequences. I know England is exceedingly bad; but, as it happens to be my native country, I would rather it should reform itself than be compelled into any degree of imaginary excellence. The virtuous, the immaculate, Americans, indeed, who are the united quintessence of all other nations, may, in process of time, bring us back to our original purity.



"I long to know whether the Guards are coming back or not. My public spirit is strangely warped by private affection. The accounts I meet with are sometimes favourable, & sometimes not. If your Lordship or M<sup>r</sup>. Harcourt know anything for certain, you will oblige me greatly by acquainting me with it. Keppel, we hear, is returned to Spit-head; is that true? & what is the real reason of it? Opposition will probably assign one cause, & Administration another. Truth, like virtue, is always in the middle; I could quote a great many scraps of Latin to prove it.

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"I have been ten days at Middleton, & the family twelve, & do not, as yet, hear anything of moving. I wish Lady Harcourt & your Lordship would come & see how fixed & contented we are. We have read two books of Spencer's 'Fairy Queen,' & are going on like dragons. Lady Charlotte & Lady Anne have desired, as a favour, that they may read 'Robinson Crusoe' to me, &, on proper terms, I have complied. Lord Villiers has been for a few minutes upon a live horse, & despises his wooden one ever since. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, July 12th, 1778.*

" . . . . . LORD JERSEY, like a true patriot, has attended a Justice meeting, & sworn in fifty raga-

muffins, substitutes, & others. I was sorry to find that many of the substitutes were weavers from Coventry, who could get no employment.

"Sr. W<sup>m</sup>. Howe, I find, brings no account of the return of the Guards, but M<sup>rs</sup>. Stephens flatters herself that the recall was not arrived when he came away. I wish I could be sure that any recall was ever sent. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, July, 1778.*

". . . . YOUR account of M<sup>rs</sup>. Lockhart<sup>a</sup> rejoices me ; I am sure she is lucky to have met with such a man as Colonel Harcourt. By what your Lordship says of her she will chuse to be happy, & consequently must be so. Married happiness, Cibber says, very truly, was never found from home. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bruton-Street, August, 1778.*

". . . . I HAVE dined but once at the Chaplains' table, & then Dr. Gisbourne, who was there, can witness that I eat very little, & drank less ; & yet my cold is not gone. It is, however, better some days than others. His Majesty's Chaplains have nothing to do but to eat & drink ; they cannot pray because none of the Royal Family are of the

<sup>a</sup> Miss Danby, daughter of Dr. Danby, married first, Mr. Lockhart ; secondly, William, Lord Harcourt's younger brother ; she eventually became Mary, Countess Harcourt.

Queen's house, & they cannot preach because the royal chappel is repairing. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Bruton-street, June, 1779.*

" . . . . I LONG to see your works at Nuneham, & your fawns, & your dead laurels, & actually propose being with you on Monday or Tuesday next; by Saturday's post I will tell you which day it shall be. I see no likelihood of the Middleton family leaving London; Lord Jersey is come back again from Euston. Her Ladyship can drive herself out for many hours every day, can go to Ranelagh, &c., &c., but cannot yet venture upon a journey. The fresh air about London does her an infinite deal of good, & is not so raw as the country air; the dust softens it exceedingly. . . .

"W. W."

*"Bruton-street, July 10th, 1779.*

" . . . . THE account is true of the transports that are run ashore off Morlaix. I fancy Sir Charles Hardy is not permitted to go beyond the chops of the Channel for fear of bad consequences at home, for our rulers are monstrously alarmed about invasions. The French, however, will have forty transports less than they had, which is a good thing.

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"The report of the Mount is that Byron has taken two ships of Destaing's squadron, one of sixty-four, the other of eighty, guns. Q<sup>y</sup>., has Destaing any ship so large as an eighty gun ?

"Clinton is likewise said to have taken several forts, & that Washington has retired up the North River. . . ."

" 1779.

". . . . PEOPLE are still, I find, in London determined upon having an invasion whether the French will or not. Mr. & Mrs. Sanderson, & Miss Shadd (who are at Brighthelmstone) saw fifty sail of ships pass by that coast ; fear made the greater part of them three-deckers, but they luckily turned out to be that part of the Jamaica fleet which was bound for London. I am a wicked wretch not to be in a violent fright, for all my betters are ; but I have lived long enough to wait events with patience, & to know that 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

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"Gibraltar is, I find, invested both by land & sea, & has been so (if not taken) ever since the thirteenth of July. There are great suspicions that the French & Spaniards have quarrelled : I wish it may be true.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I hope Mr. Brown stayed some days with you,

& that the weather was fine enough for him to see every part of Nuneham at leisure. I long to have him find fault with some trifle or other in Mason's alterations; your Lordship must at least tell him, when you write, that he has done so, & it would not be amiss to magnify it a little, or put it into Miss Fauquier's hands, if she should happen to see him in the North. I will undertake Mason's defence afterwards, for I will not suffer him to be run down. . . .

"Loves, respects, services, compliments, &c.,  
"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, Sept. 16th, 1779.*

". . . . THE report of Lord Temple's fall did not reach Middleton till the day before he died. Most of the Grenvilles, I find, were there, & Miss Stapylton returned from seeing Lady Blandford die to the same melancholy scene at Stow. The trepanning gave him great pain. He had suffered very little till that operation, & probably would have gone off easier without it. Dr. Parsons, & some surgeon from Oxford, attended him, not Mr. Nousse; there was an etiquette in the case, but I cannot tell what. . . .

"Loves, services, &c.,  
"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, Sept. 29th, 1779.*

".... THE following is the story of the Island of Pines, which I will just give you a sketch of, tho' (as Boys says) I shall tell it miserably.

"In some year or other a London Merchant was passing from England to the East Indies, with his whole family. The ship was cast away, and everybody drowned but the merchant's daughter, two white maids, & one black one, together with young Mr. Pine, the merchant's clerk. These, with the wreck of the vessel, were thrown upon a desert island. The young man was a perfect Robinson Crusoe, & by his industry & activity procured the necessaries of life for himself & his companions, &, after a certain time, some conveniences likewise. He was a conscientious youth, & concluded that Providence had sent him thither to people the island. He accordingly, in a solemn manner, took to wife one of the white maids; he was a youth that loved peace, & therefore, after a few scruples, & without any proneness, as Lady Wishfort says, to an iteration of nuptials, he likewise took to wife the other.

"In the meantime Miss grew up, whom he had always had an eye upon as the properest match, &, out of gratitude to her father's memory, he took her to wife also. Nobody now remained but little Blacky; humanity prevailed, & she became his fourth consort. The spouses were all prolific (for

it was an island, & abounded in shell-fish); all particularly attentive to Mr. Pine's health, & tolerably civil & assisting to each other; so that he had the satisfaction of living to see himself the master & father of four large families, & to intermarry his children with great propriety; for he acted in this important affair with the same purity & conscientiousness as he had always done. He joined the daughters of one wife to the sons of another, & when the island was discovered (I think in Charles the 2<sup>nd</sup>'s time), the people were found to consist of four distinct tribes. . . .

"Loves, respects, services, &c.,  
"W. W."

"*Middleton Park, Sept. 30th, 1779.*

" . . . By her size it seems high time that Lady Jersey should be in town, unless she would do a better thing for her health, which is, lie in in the country. My servant, who is a judge, says it is his opinion that she will *fall to pieces* next month at latest. Pray Heaven it may be a boy, & a stout one; the present boy still keeps your Lordship's letter in his pocket, & whenever he finds, what Milton calls, *fit audience*, takes it out to read. He read it the other day to Mrs. Johnson. N.B. He always laughs at the same places, so that the wit is sterling, & does not depend upon the first dazzle. . . ."



*" Bruton-street, June, 1780.*

"YOUR Lordship will easily guess that our riots here cause a million of rumours in which there is no truth ; the realities are bad enough. The mob have, as yet, done no mischief nearer this end of the town than Warwick-street, where they first began, but I will inquire more before I close my letter. Newgate they have certainly burned down, & released the felons, &c. The Poultry, Compter, & some other prisons and bridewells, they have likewise set open. Sir George Savile's, Lord Mansfield's, & some other houses, they have stripped likewise, & destroyed the furniture, as the newspapers will inform you. At Lord Mansfield's the soldiers fired, & killed several ; & they have taken into their heads that Colonel Stephens ordered them to fire, who was not there, but with another party of Guards at the Royal Exchange. They, therefore, vow vengeance, & threaten to burn his house & destroy him. You may imagine we are greatly alarmed on this account. Mrs. Stephens has left her house, frightened out of her senses ; but I hope nothing will come of it. I am glad you & Lady Harcourt are out of Town.

"I will add nothing to my account but the following proclamation, issued this afternoon, which will sufficiently shew you our situation. I hope it will have effect :—

"A proclamation is issued directing all persons

to remain within their dwellings, & notifying that the King has thought proper to give orders to his officers to use the most immediate & effectual means for suppressing the present tumults.'

"Another Council is to be held at seven this evening.

"This is authentic, tho' I have it only in manuscript.

"When I hear anything more, if we are alive to-morrow morning, you shall know it. . . .

"W. W."

*" Bruton-street.*

"WEDNESDAY night, a night of peril. There is an encampment in Hyde Park. Lady Jersey desires me to say that she would have written if I had not."

*" Bruton-street, June 9th, 1780.*

"I MUST write two lines to your Lordship. I sent you a bad account in my last, but since that the necessary slaughter has made this town more peaceable. The last night was a quiet one, without fires or tumults; the consternation still continues; Lord George Gordon is sent to the Tower. My information came from Lord Jersey at dinner to-day. He & her Ladyship set out for Middleton to-morrow. The newspapers tell you all our calamities, sometimes a little exaggerated. . . .

"W. W."

“ *London, June, 1780.*

“ YOUR Lordship has sent me a most delightful letter, tho’ you are rather wicked, as well as clever, in the conclusion of it. I can excuse prejudices, because I have, now & then, some few of them myself; but do not be too violent. It is a great satisfaction to be able to write to you without crying fire and murder. We are so very peaceable that I am half reconciled to a military government.

“ The Camp in St. James’s Park is so extremely pretty that you would be charmed with the sight of it.

“ Tents, ammunition, colours, carriages, cannons, & kettle-drums.

“ Only think of the lawn betwixt the Mall & the Canal thus spangled & ornamented in regular rows, with the soldiery as spruce as the scene they are placed in. Hyde Park, I am told, is more warlike, but I have been hitherto contented with the milder appearance.

“ Your account of Nuneham is excellent; I long to enjoy it, & am happy to hear Lord Jersey has been with you; but why are you not both here to attend Parliament? You should leave the ladies to their *rural Elysiums*, & join Minos & Rhadamanthus, & Heaven knows who, in their awful distribution of rewards & punishments. What is to be done in the Houses to-day I do not know, but it is said His Majesty is to go down. If I am

acquainted with anything time enough you shall have it. . . .

“W. W.”

“*Bruton-street, June, 1780.*”

“A BIT of paper in the shape of a letter, whether anything is written in it or not, is, I presume, acceptable in the country, if it comes from this tumultuous town. In the first place this town is not tumultuous; both the parks, to be sure, have encampments in them, & as I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with any of the doorkeepers or sentries, I have not been able to get into either. The Horse Guards patrol the streets very quietly, & people at this end of the town walk about very peaceably. In the City, where I was to-day, there were garrisons in abundance, at the Bank, the Exchange, the Excise Office, the South-sea House, &c.; they are well guarded. The only garrison I entered was that at Grocers' Hall, where I called upon Colonel Stephens. The five rooms there are well littered down with straw, on which many were sleeping who had been up last night, & were probably to-night to take their duty again. There were a sufficient number, however, awake. The officers have not been in bed for this week past, but they seem very jolly & well. They are at present much caressed in the City, & entirely maintained. You would not have dis-

liked the sight ; they have a tolerable garden, with flowering shrubs, & a little squirting fountain in it.

“Miss Fauquier will probably send all the rumours, therefore I will say nothing about the King, Queen, & Prince of Wales, for I do not believe a syllable of it, & because, likewise, after my expeditions of to-day, I am heartily tired, & shall be too late for the post if I do not close my letter immediately. . . .

“W. W.

“P.S. I cannot help adding a serio-comic circumstance : Wilkes has exerted himself, & attacked a Printer & Co. for publishing seditious papers.”

“*Middleton Park, June 28th, 1780.*

“IT is but handsome to let your Lordship know that I arrived safe at Middleton in less than three hours after I left Nuneham. Had I been longer in my journey I might possibly have been too late for dinner, for the reform in the family in that respect is prodigious. Be it known to all persons we dine now at three o'clock, by the Middleton clock too, which is a quarter before that at Nuneham, & a full half-hour before those in Oxford & London. If I was not always hungry in fine fresh air (both before & after dinner, breakfast, & supper), I should hardly have time to provoke an appetite. I found the Lord & Lady

going out upon a neighbourly visit, to junket with their friends, but the two eldest young ladies did me the honour of accompanying me in my repast.

"I like this change mightily, & shall probably, by means of it, get rid of some of those distempers which, you know by your list, I am occasionally troubled with. My navel has not been cold since I was here, which it generally is an hour before dinner, if I wait long, & usually ends in a diarrhœa. I need not desire you not to mention this to the ladies, for I am perfectly acquainted with your Lordship's delicacy. Alas! it is too true, I have a prognosticating navel,—but I will not dwell upon melancholy subjects. . . .

"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, July, 1780.*

". . . . I REJOICE at your expedition in the works at Nuneham, & have no doubt of their excellence; at least I shall not find fault with them till I hear Mr. Mason commends them. If he is in raptures, I shall probably cool; & if he dislikes, admire. Contradiction is the soul of conversation. Pray lay aside that horrible resolution of having nothing more to do with your carriage till you go to London for the winter.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Your church has long been admired as a heathen temple, it will now be the boast of Pro-

testantism, & the little tinkling bell will summon us in reality 'to all the pride of prayer.' By the by, the Communion plate at Middleton is very extraordinary, the flagon, cup, &c., are silver-gilt; they were given by Lord Carleton, & put the church itself out of countenance.

"Mr. Lascelles having declined standing for Yorkshire may possibly bring Mason to you sooner than you expected. I hope no new rebellion will fall in his way & stop him. . . ."

*"George-street, London, June 5th, 1781.*

". . . . LETTERS are at last received from Lord Cornwallis, & confirm his victories, & a great deal of slaughter. The Gazette will probably not be time enough out for me to send it to you. Mr. North, who danced a minuet on the birth-night, trod upon the King's toes, & alarmed the Queen, & made her cry out, 'have a care what you are about!'

"N.B. He danced with Miss Twysden. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, July 30th, 1781.*

". . . . I WAS here by myself only three days after I left Nuneham. I do not know why I call it by myself, for I had some excellent companions with me, who are exceedingly sorry that you have taken away the flight of steps at Nuneham. They thought them one of the prettiest ornaments about



the house, & had talked much of them to Mrs. Bordes; the running up & down them, it seems, was an amusement. Lady Jersey has brought Lord Villiers a new horse from Bath, to which I have given the name of Bum-Brusher, but it is a name only to be known to ourselves in private; it would be a serious affront if the secret was to be communicated to the servants, & therefore he is to be called Minikin in the stables. Gods & men, according to Homer, called things by different names. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

*“Middleton Park, Aug. 18th, 1781.”*

“. . . . I CAN squeeze nothing from Lord & Lady Jersey; indeed, they both talk of writing to Harrogate themselves. Lord Hyde tells me the King, Queen, Prince of Wales, &c., &c., &c., have made a morning visit to the Grove. They arrived totally unexpected about eleven o'clock, & stayed till after three, put the family in a bustle, & hindered them from going out to dinner where they were engaged. They liked it, nevertheless, & were all invited, & went, to the Prince of Wales's birthday at Windsor.

“Pray tell Lord Harcourt that my friend Dr. Balgay has declined accepting a bishoprick, on account of his time of life, & the badness of his constitution. How many would wish to be called

'My Lord' on their deathbed, & to have Right Reverend Father in God engraved on their tombstones! . . . ."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 11th, 1781.*

"YOUR Lordship knows what I have always said about Carminatives, that they produce the wind before they expel it. I am afraid I may say something like it with regard to Harrogate water; for, by your Lordship's account of it, it seems to increase, if not create, the disease in order to have the credit of curing it. However, if it really does cure it at last I shall be perfectly contented. It will be *secundum artem*; many great physicians, I believe, practise in that manner. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Sept. 1781.*

"WHETHER this will catch your Lordship at Harrogate I do not know; but I am very glad to find that you make that place so easy to you. Men worth knowing seldom attend water-drinking places unless they are invalids. The generality of people who are not sick go thither to be what they call jolly. Drunken country squires, & *beau* tradesmen from the neighbouring towns, were its principal manufacture the little time I had once the pleasure of being at Harrogate; but that was many years ago.

"You say nothing of your intended excursion to York, but I presume it is to take place, as Mason has made you a visit, & you seem perfectly acquainted with the Miss Morris.

\* \* \* \* \*

"All here are well; Lord Villiers is gone to school again, & the whole Clarendon family left Middleton this morning. I have just received the fourth book of the 'Garden,' & must beg the favour of your Lordship, as you will probably see the author, to make my acknowledgements to him, tho' it is not impossible but I may thank him myself. . . . .

"W. W."

*"London.*

" . . . . . THE minority was very large in the House of Commons on Wednesday night, & Lord North was obliged to assure the country gentlemen that there would be no war carried on upon the Continent of America; they were only to keep some particular posts, & act by sea principally. The papers probably will tell you more of this than I can.

"Lord le Despenser is dead; Lord Hyde is talked of to succeed Lord John Clinton about the Prince of Wales, but he knows nothing of it himself; Lord Chesterfield to be Lord-Lieutenant of Bucks in the place of Lord le Despenser. The comic opera is

said to be the finest thing ever exhibited. Lord George Gordon is to marry Miss Aquilar. My journey was a very pleasant one, & very expeditious. A great fog at Nettlebed, & a greater in London. Very excellent cold beef at Hounslow, & my lodgings in Town totally unprepared for me, because they expected me last night, & did not think I would come to-day. What can I say more? I have not yet been at the Mount. . . .

“W. W.”

*“Bruton-street, June 29th, 1782.*

“ . . . . AS to news from this place, public or private, Miss Fauquier is your sheet-anchor. I have heard nothing of Lord Rockingham to-day, but he certainly has been, if not is, in great danger. What a loss he would be to the present administration! But I have nothing to do with politics, I am a loyal subject, & belong to every administration. I remember Lady Harcourt was once in that mild way of thinking, but evil communications, &c. We are, however, all together at present, & a blessing it is that we are so. Union of hearts & gooseberry tarts. . . .

“W. W.”

*“Bruton-street, July 4th, 1782.*

“YOUR Lordship is superabundantly good indeed, & have given me a most excellent detail of

the present state of Nuneham. I am perfectly acquainted with the whole house. On the first reading of your letter I could not help pitying your shattered condition, but on a second perusal I found that, exclusive of the breakfast-room, you were in possession of as much as I ever expected you would be by this time, or indeed, as you will ever make use of when the house is finished, unless you have a good (*bad*) deal of company.

“You know I have long prophesied that you will never get beyond the little blue-room & the eating-room: the octagon & great drawing-room will belong to the state apartment, & be solemn appurtenances to the Velvet Bedchamber. The saloon may have its allurements in a hot summer afternoon, or a cool morning in autumn (as its situation is calculated both to avoid & enjoy the sun), but beyond that you will never stir a step. That you are so much pleased with what is already done is an excellent circumstance; what is doing will always amuse you, & lead your impatience gently on to a happy conclusion. I say this as thinking it possible that you may now & then be impatient on a hot day, or a cold day, or a wet day, or, in short, any day when the wind is in any quarter; for we are all frail, & subject to what Shakespear calls the skyey influence. You did not mention the party, nor how you found the bank of trees which

were planted to hide the offices. I will not ask after the sunk fence; if it does not do as it should do I will never know it, for I will never go near it.

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"I believe I shall follow your Lordship's advice & pay a visit to Osterley next week. Colonel Stephens is to procure a ticket. The park at Osterley, when I saw it, was worse than a dead flat,—it was a dreary dead flat; for as to flats merely 'lawns & level downs, & flocks grazing the tender herb,' I can be pleased with them, & think those who require everywhere great inequalities, & Heaven knows what, have rather a contracted dram-drinking taste than a good one; they are enemies to their own satisfactions. If what it has is right, what does it signify what a place wants. I shall say nothing about Windsor, that is a sacred subject, tho' I know there are sneerers who have talked about dry ditches. . . .

"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, July 18th, 1782.*

". . . . I DINED with the Fauquier family the day before I set out, & find they are all going to wash at Brighthelmstone, or, as the country people call it, Brighton. Most people seem to think as your Lordship does, that the reasons given by the seceders from administration for their going out are the very reasons which should

have kept them in. Mr. W. says the Crown is again lapsed to his Majesty. I could say something upon that head, but I will be hanged if I do to such wicked people as you are, & will therefore change the subject to avoid temptation.

"I am sorry to find your house advances so slowly; by your Lordship's first letter I took it for granted you would, long before this time, have been in absolute possession of the eating-room & the little blue room, if not the saloon, & what more could you desire for comfort? the fitting-up the rest would be only a summer amusement. This, I believe, I expressed in one of my letters, & thought I was talking very rationally, tho', perhaps, I might a little exceed the strict bounds of probability.

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"We could not get a ticket for Osterley last week, as Mr. Child was gone to some distance from London on a visit, so that I must not expect to see that place till next summer. . . .

"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, 1782.*

"I MUST thank your Lordship for the very entertaining & obliging letter which your painting Bard<sup>r</sup> delivered to me this morning at breakfast.

<sup>r</sup> Mr. Mason.



He is here in his own element ; he has been in constant employment from the very moment he came. I will not say that he is an Orpheus, & makes woods follow him, but he certainly makes underwoods fall before him, & posts & rails vanish at his presence. He stays here to-night & to-morrow, goes to Wakefield on Saturday, & returns hither again on Tuesday. . . .

“W. W.”

“*Middleton Park, Aug. 1782.*”

“I MUST steal five minutes from my attentions to M<sup>rs</sup>. Stephens (a subject your Lordship used to be very censorious upon in London) to express my regret for having left Nuneham, notwithstanding the agreeable society I meet with here. I never performed a journey so rapidly in my life ; your Lordship’s clock, when I set out, wanted a quarter of twelve, & the clocks were only striking twelve when I arrived at Oxford. You have, therefore, three quarters of an hour’s law, & may do everything handsome before you go to church, & avoid a Sunday-feel for the rest of the day, a very comfortable circumstance.

\* \* \* \* \*

“If I could write (& read) like M<sup>r</sup>. Pennant I would describe all the little deviations I made from the high road, first to the left, to M<sup>r</sup>. Hayes’s, the bookbinder (whose son is just married), where

I bespoke six Common Prayer-Books, printed at Cambridge in the year 1766; then to the right, to Mr. Jackson's, the printer, where I purchased a box of the celebrated analeptic pills, invented by the great Dr. James, of drunken memory. Then again to the left, to a grocer's, directly opposite to the very spot where Bocardo stood, from whence I was obliged to carry off half-a-pound of snuff, of Hardham's best, in a sheet of brown paper, because, as I presume, canisters, tho' mentioned by Homer (as Mr. Pope's translation can prove,—

“‘And load the shining canisters with bread),’

are not yet introduced even in a learned University. I should likewise, naturally, from the word *grocer*, digress to Ignatius Sancho's letters, to which, I perceive, your Lordship is not a subscriber, tho' a Mr. Mason is; whether the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Precentor or not, he only can determine. Lady Jersey is, & the books are here, & there is a long list likewise of many of your acquaintance. I shall read them immediately, for he seems a worthy creature from what I have seen by dipping, but I have not time to say anything more about him.

“One piece of news I must add: the match at Blenheim is off amicably, tho' it gives great uneasiness to Lord Trentham<sup>s</sup>, who is going abroad

<sup>s</sup> If this match had come off Lord Trentham would never have been Duke of Sutherland.

for a year. The refusal came from the young lady, but in the most civil & ingenuous manner.

"I hope your Lordship's case of grouse from Sir H. Williamson, tho' they smelt exceedingly strong to-day at Henley, came sweet to Nuneham. 'I believe you must pot them.'

"There is such a noise at the cribbage-table that I hardly know what I write, & therefore had better conclude with proper compliments to your Lordship & Co. . . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 4th, 1782.*

" . . . . . I MUST not ramble on any farther without thanking your Lordship for your excellently minute account of everything that is done & doing at Nuneham. You describe so well that I see it all, even to the little colifichet of the urn & the rose-bush, which will be a delightful part for me to find fault with, tho' I cannot help confessing Mr. M. has won upon me so much by his late kind remonstrances with regard to the new water-closet, that I shall with difficulty bring myself for the future to object (even to his face) to anything he does. I hope he has told you that I rehearsed the operation with a door & a chair at Oxford, & that I think I shall be able to manage it without much suffocation. That cheek-by-jowl affair with the ladies in the passage is certainly ill-contrived,

& Miss Fauquier is of my opinion. The *dulcis strepitus* (she says) of Horace (which may be translated *Grunt Harmonious*) should not be overheard ; nor should the sexes go hand in hand to the altars of necessity anywhere but at water-drinking places, where it may be useful to make shy people acquainted. You speak so highly of the terraces that I am afraid the windows will be continually open, &, out of flattery to your Lordship's taste, one must be obliged to catch cold a dozen times a-day. If they are shut down in the eating-room during dinner & supper it is all that I shall desire.

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"I must not conclude my letter without proper congratulations on Jack's marriage. May he people your village with a great many as good young men as himself. I hope his wife is dressy if not handsome. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 1782.*

"I AM glad to find you advance so happily at Nuneham, & that your Lordship finds so much agreeable employment in hanging the pictures. As to Mr. Mason's Samaritan<sup>t</sup>, I am bound by the strictest secrecy to say nothing about it ; when it comes out in all its glory I must & will talk. I

<sup>t</sup> Painted as an altar-piece for Nuneham Church. It now hangs in the south corridor in the house.

am rather afraid you will make it too fine for the simplicity of the rest of the church. Are the mule's ears & other extremities to be tipped with gold likewise? I have seen that done to lions & unicorns with a surprizing effect, but I must say no more on this sacred subject. The library, I perceive, is to have its beauties as well as wits; the inspirers as well as the inspired. I hope it will always have a good fire, & its doors & windows shut. Thank Heaven it has no terraces.

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"The affair at Blenheim is, I perceive (by your Lordship's letter, & by what I hear from other quarters), seen in different lights. The Lady of this family defends the young lady very strenuously without the least reflection on the gentleman; & most certainly, if she did not like him, she was in the right to refuse him even at last, & he had better be without her than with her. The mother, I should imagine, was rather inclined to the match, as it was into her own family. Some people have conjectured, but it is merely conjecture, that the young lady would have preferred an offer from another cousin, Lord Herbert. He, your Lordship knows, was applying for Miss Child. After all it has probably only arisen from girlish inexperience, timidity at first made her accept what she even then disapproved of. . . .

"W. W."

*" Middleton Park, Sept. 18th, 1782.*

"MR. MASON is come back again to Middleton, & has brought Mr. Stonhewer with him. When he will return to Nuneham I cannot tell; he is so delighted with the aptness of Lord Jersey's gardener to receive instructions, that I believe he would willingly pass a month or two with him. As to myself, I certainly propose, with your Lordship's permission, to be at Nuneham on Monday next, notwithstanding I have a rheumatism at present in my *os sacrum* (called so from its being the priest's part in the sacrifice). His Majesty begins hunting next week, which will oblige Lord Jersey to be backwards & forwards; & her Ladyship will have her excursions likewise. Anything is preferable, you know, to being long at home, & she is thoroughly convinced that all pretensions to love, or even bear with, the country, are affectation, especially in women. . . .

"W. W."

To the Countess Harcourt :—

*" Mount Coffee House, Dec. 1782.*

" . . . . . I CALLED upon Lady Jersey yesterday; I dined with her to-day. I called upon Miss Fauquier this morning; I dine with her to-morrow. Both ladies write to you; I can swear for one, for I saw the letter written, & I send it inclosed. The

operation was performed while we were at dinner, for it seems she had just returned from the poor sick Duchess of Devonshire, & eaten so much brawn with her, to stay their stomachs for fashionable hours, that she could only get down a lark & a-half, & employed the other tedious time, while the meat was upon the table, in letters to dear friends. She supped with the poor sick Duchess, too, last night, & stayed, out of compassion only, till two in the morning. She is just gone to the opera, & I am at the Mount scribbling this nonsense. . . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

To Lord Harcourt :—

“*Middleton Park, Aug. 12th, 1783.*”

“I WROTE a scrap of a note to your Lordship as soon as I arrived here, merely, as I told you, to make my acknowledgements, & shew my good breeding. I have lived in a hurry ever since, & taken more exercise (Lord help me!) in three days than in two months’ quiet residence at Nuneham. There are persons, you know, who cannot rest unless they spin like a top, & live upon a whirligig. Besides riding & driving we are now fond of prodigious long walks in dirty lanes & cross-roads. It is well I was a little prepared by the water-parties, or I should have absolutely been



broken-winded by this time. Give *me*, for real pleasure, a fourscore-miles' journey in a postchaise, with good inns at every stage, & the glasses up or down just as I chuse it; as to the blinds I would never use them at all. Lord Jersey has taken a ride this morning to breakfast at Wakefield, probably hunt, & returns in the evening.

"Mason's alterations succeed very well: the Strombolo walk is still a little Strombolo, but will be better every year if the other shrubs grow as well as the laurels. The sweep of the walk thro' the wood, to avoid the north terrace, is excellent, tho' it is not Mason's; the combination of it, which is his, is excellent likewise, & I hope, will still be continued by degrees. Your Lordship would do it to-morrow morning before breakfast.

"I told you I was not cold; I was not the first day of my arrival, but to make up for it I have been cold ever since. North winds, strong showers occasionally, & not a wasp stirring. I have not yet recovered the doors and windows of Sir H. Dashwood's house last Sunday. It was not a common running stream of air, but a cold bath in violent motion. We did not stay long, & most of that little time I got into the garden to warm myself. Lady Dashwood speaks highly of Nuneham & its flower-garden, tho' she has not seen it these two years.

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"I beg my best respects to Lady Vernon & her three young ladies, particularly to Miss Vernon's Italian, Miss Anne's music, & Miss Louisa's curiosity. . . ."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 19th, 1783.*

"I AM at present playing a solo at Middleton, but I have seven strings to my fiddle, for all the young gentry are with me. The Lord & Lady are taking the delightful diversion, this warm weather, of hunting in the forest; I could almost say, with Shakespear's clown, 'the more fools they.' This is the third day since their departure, & they are to return when the destinies decree, which I fancy will be to-morrow; & they may possibly bring some dear friends with them, if they have any there whom they cannot avoid asking, or chuse to invite.

"I am obliged to Mrs. Clive for her explanation of the relationship between our old friend and Mrs. W.; not that I should have been greatly hurt had she been nearer allied. It is many an honest woman's case, especially in that ticklish situation the stage, to have even her daughter, grand-daughter, and great-grand-daughter go astray for three generations; sixteen quarters in virtue would be a miracle. I am glad, however, her venison was untainted, & heartily wish her another haunch as fat, as tender, & as immaculate.

"There was a report here, some days ago, that General Evelyn was dead. Is it true? I have not seen it in the papers. The report added that Mr. & Mrs. Harcourt were with him when he fell from his horse, & that his death followed almost immediately, tho' he did not at first perceive he was hurt.

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"The Strombolo Walk <sup>u</sup> looks at present rather sneaking, but I have been used to dignity & Brown's Hill <sup>x</sup>. Four of the good folks here send their loves, & the other three look as if they wish to send theirs too. Lord Villiers is ten years old this day.

"W. W.

"P.S. Your Lordship is very obliging in wishing me at Nuneham. I am certainly, in general, better there than anywhere; the company, the manner of life, in short, the *tout ensemble*, agrees with me exceedingly, & you are extremely good in letting me avail myself of it so frequently. It will not, I dare say, be a great while before I wait upon you again, & I shall do it with infinite satisfaction."

"Middleton Park, Sept. 8th, 1783.

".... I HAVE the agreeable opportunity of offering you my company, such as it is, once more at Nuneham. I shall now have *resided* (as the clergy call it, ask Mr. Mason else) five whole

<sup>u</sup> At Middleton.

<sup>x</sup> At Nuneham.

weeks at Middleton, come Thursday next, & shall add some days to the account before I have the honour of dining with your Lordship on Monday the 15th inst. But why do I talk of myself when you have probably by this time, or will have shortly, the visitor of all visitors, Miss M.? She is not, I find, gone to Ireland, but has left Bath for *some time* on the *pressing* invitation of her friends. Lady North expects her with impatience at Bushy, & Lord & Lady Harcourt will never forgive her if she does not contrive to spend *some time* at Nuneham, 'for they are all fond of *me*. Mr. North is so delighted with the white satin night-cap *I* embroidered for him, that he dies to shew *me* some particular civilities. It is impossible to say when *I* shall get back again, *I* shall be so *fetée*, *caressée*,' &c.

"All this is true; the perambulations are begun, as you, perhaps, already know by woful experience. I hope the visit of *some time* will be over before *I* arrive; however, if it is not *I* can bear it, *I* am only a lodger. . . .

"W. W."

"Charles-street, Grosvenor-square.

"I AM sorry for your oats; as to your Lordship's abuse of the place, you know I never mind it. You are a wicked wretch, & ought to have been left at Stanton Harcourt. O! if you had, what a delightful

castle would you have built! so gloriously gloomy that you might have laughed at the idea of an additional window-tax.

\* \* \* \* \*

"As to news, you will have heard of Miss Laura Keppel from the fountain-head. I hear the little smart maid that belonged to Lady Horatia Walgrave was her attendant in her flight. Lord Beau-lieu kissed hands yesterday for an Earldom. . . .

"W. WHITEHEAD."

*"Charles-street, Grosvenor-square,  
June 21st, 1784.*

". . . . I AM not at all acquainted with any of the politicians of the times; all my knowledge of state affairs is derived from the newspapers, & would be stale intelligence before it could reach you. I only wish the ministry would dispatch their own important businesses, & have some little regard to the civil list. If they will only pay me one hundred pounds of my arrears I will quit London immediately, for I am tired of staying in it; but without that sum I cannot conveniently & creditably depart; the remainder I would wait for with patience till the destinies & so forth shall decree its payment. . . .

"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, Aug. 22nd, 1784.*

" . . . I DARE say M<sup>r</sup>. Mason told you with what *extreme complacency* he looked round on all his operations at this place. I should have told you, if I had come back with him, how his vanity swagg<sup>er</sup>ed: 'This I do not repent of;' 'I was rather lucky here;' '& this (of at least half a-dozen things) was absolutely the best alteration I ever made in my life.' But, as he is not with you, I shall drop the subject. I hope he takes Nuneham in his way when he returns home. . . .

"W. W."

From Lord Harcourt to Mr. Whitehead :—

*"Monday.*

"NOTWITHSTANDING the late beautifull alteration in the flower-garden, that favorite spot (like the master of it) has seen its best days, and I fear will never be to me what it has been, for my poor faithfull Walter dropped down dead in it on Saturday morning, and, though assistance was at hand immediately, expired. His loss, I am very certain, can never be repaired, for I must not expect to meet with half his skill or half his merit in any successor I may make choice of; and I am so much a creature of habit, that I shall ever miss him, who was become, by length of years and faithfull service, a part of the place, and almost of

myself. I prophesy of my orange-trees that they will all wither now he is gone, and I shall be long before I can take any interest in a place which owed so much of its excellence to the unceasing care of the humble friend I have lost. You, who know how much of my time I have passed for a long course of years in the flower-garden with your old acquaintance, will not be surprised at the shock his death has given me. We dine at the Bishop of Salisbury's to-morrow to avoid seeing or knowing anything of Walter's funeral, which, because he was universally known and esteemed in all the neighbourhood, will be attended, it is thought, by a vast concourse of people.

"Gen. Johnson and the divine Cecelia came here on Thursday, and left us this morning, and it is impossible to say how agreeable and amusing she has been, nor how much we wished she could have prolonged her stay here. Lady and the Misses Vernon send comp<sup>ts</sup>. without number, as does also Lady Harcourt, who goes again to London on Wednesday, so that for three days, and perhaps longer, I shall not have a mortal with me here, nor do I desire any company that requires to have the honours of the house and place done to them, but, if you should be at liberty by the frisks and frolics of the Earl and Countess<sup>y</sup>, pre-



vious to their setting out on their long tour, to leave Middleton, I shall think it very fortunate (whatever you may do). . . . .

“Adieu.”

Mr. Whitehead to Lord Harcourt :—

*“Middleton Park, Aug. 1784.*

“I VERY sincerely condole with your Lordship for the loss of poor Walter. It really hurts me exceedingly, you will so continually feel the want of him without being able possibly to supply his place. You may get a diligent, a faithful, & an intelligent servant (tho’ very hard to meet with), but you can never get *the* man. You have been so habituated to his very errors that you will not like a person who is without them. Time & custom had given him a right to indulgence: what will be a downright fault in another, & put you out of humour, was only amusing in him. Indeed, I am extremely sorry for him, & shall not myself be easily reconciled to the garden without him. His poor old father must be very miserable. . . .

“W. W.”

*“Middleton Park, 1784.*

“I CAN hold out no longer; I must enquire after Nuneham & its inhabitants. I was in hope Mr. Mason, as there is a pen & ink in the bower, &

as he must necessarily have spent a pretty deal of time in the flower-garden, would at least have told me the Fauquier family were well, & that Miss Fauquier approved of his Flora, tho' she could not say much in praise of his Anaconda. As to your Lordship, I cannot say I expected a line from you till the operation of your journey had done working. By Lady Jersey's account you may possibly have had a second dose; &, if so, I almost doubt your being yet able even to paint your distress, especially to one whose hard heart feels so little for such intolerable grievances. . . .

“W. W.”

“*Middleton Park, Dec. 22nd, 1784.*”

“YOUR Lordship must not imagine that I was the only guest you were so rude as to leave at Nuneham. Poor Mr. Robinson had particularly desired somebody to call him very early, which office was punctually performed; but, in the performance of it, the obliging somebody locked him into his room, where he remained a prisoner till Betsey, like the rosy-fingered morn, unbarred the gates, which event did not take place till after she had paid her *devoirs* to the departing family, and brought, as usual, the capuchin & the clogs (that had unluckily been forgotten) to the coach-door. Then Industry clapped her broom into her hand, & sent her upstairs. So much for fine writing.

N.B. I always take care to keep the keys of my doors withinside.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The cold of this place is certainly more piercing than that at Nuneham; I shall be hardened to it in a day or two. From the brightest morning that could be, it at this very moment, of a sudden, snows abominably. If the snow is general you may thank your stars you travelled yesterday; I shall hope to hear you had an excellent journey. My Middleton friends are now, probably, on their road from Blenheim, & will find it slippery.

"I am now writing by the drawing-room fire, which, thank Heaven, has ceased to be a wood one. I ought to have written to your Lordship by the post this morning, but no letters were sent; indeed, if they had, mine could not have gone with them, for I was in bed long after they would have set out. To-morrow I begin rising at nine o'clock, & endeavour to shake off Nuneham bad habits. . . .

"W. W."

*"Middleton Park, Jan. 2nd, 1785.*

"I AM to thank your Lordship not only for your obliging letter to myself, but for the one to Lord Jersey. And so poor Mrs. Siddons can neither write nor read, and is daily losing her at-

tractions? Such idle censures, & such neglects, all great talents must experience; & she must comfort herself with not deserving them, & shame her detractors by shining on. Novelty, not Excellence, is the idol both of the great vulgar & the small; but the latter, luckily, is lasting, & the few whose praise is worth having will always admire it. Therefore, do not advise her to dance on the slack-wire, or fly from a church steeple, tho' it might gain her the applause of millions, & the immortality of perhaps a whole fortnight. . . .

“W. WHITEHEAD.”

UNPUBLISHED VERSES BY  
MR. WHITEHEAD.



## THE REMOVAL OF THE VILLAGE AT NUNEHAM.

---

“THE careful matrons of the plain  
Had left their cots without a sigh,  
Well pleased to shroud their little train  
In happier mansions, warm, & dry :  
While Mopsa still, with ling’ring pace,  
And many a look, & many a tear,  
Oft’ tried in vain to quit the place ;  
Her feet were chained ; her heart was there :  
’Twas there from youth to age the Dame  
Her morn, her noon, her eve, had passed :  
’Twas there her Colin told his flame ;  
’Twas there her Colin breath’d his last.  
On homely fare, by scanty fires,  
’Twas there she nurs’d her infant care ;  
And every duty life requires  
Had prudent Mopsa practic’d there.  
And must she leave the dear-lov’d shed,  
Coeval with her tottering frame ?  
She, too, must mingle with the dead,—  
The time, the fate, should be the same.  
Each flower which round her cottage grows,  
Will still her fostering aid demand ;  
The tree, which o’er her waves its boughs,  
Was planted by her virgin hand.



The bordering hedge, the sloping field,  
The path her footsteps wont to press,  
Tho' once with negligence beheld,  
Was now an object of distress.  
There are who boast their hoarded grain,  
Their flocks, & numerous herds ; & some,  
They say, will rove the world for gain,  
And bring their countless treasures home ;  
For those, alas, let others strive,  
To her no greater bliss could be,  
Than in her cottage still to live,  
And die beside her favorite tree :  
This Harcourt heard with pitying ear,  
And 'midst th' enchanting scene he plann'd,  
Indulgent to her humble prayer,  
Allow'd her clay-built cot to stand.  
And Mopsa, to reward her worth  
As daughter, sister, wife, & mother,  
Enjoy'd this Paradise on earth,  
Till death remov'd her to another.

“MR. WHITEHEAD presents his respects to Lady Nuneham, & has sent inclos'd the Eclogue she desired; he has no doubt that her Ladyship will peruse it with the same sensibility with which the author wrote it. The critics he defies, for it has the great requisites which they demand, it has a beginning, a middle, & an end, & is, perhaps, in that respect, one of the most perfect pieces which any age has produced. Little inaccuracies will easily be excused by the candid & judicious where the whole is so complete. Modesty will not permit him to expatiate any farther.”

The Eclogue which follows was occasioned by Lord Harcourt's having spoken with admiration of a French garden :—

#### THE FLOWER GARDEN : AN ECLOGUE.

“PROPT on his cane, with Annette by his side  
(Filon ran loose, & poor Coquette was tied),  
While N——'s Lord his blooming wild explores,  
And reigns unrivall'd o'er his realm of flowers.  
A sudden thought disturbs his pensive breast,  
And thus th' ingenuous feelings were exprest :—  
'In this vile world is everything confin'd?  
Must Nature be what Nature was design'd?  
In vain does spring its dewy moisture shed,  
And wake the drooping lily from its bed :

In vain do summers' suns expand the rose,  
And gorgeous autumns spread their golden glows,  
If all that live must die, if each fair flower  
Alike expects th' inevitable hour,  
Whether whole tribes insatiate storms invade,  
Or one by one the pale-eyed beauties fade !

“ ‘Oft, when they shine, at some delightful noon,  
Refresh'd with rains, & gilded by the sun,  
And I, with almost ecstasy, survey  
My little troops in all their bright array :  
Ev'n in their blooms their hapless fate I see,  
And weep, like Xerxes, their mortality !

“ ‘O happier France ! Your gardens I revere ;  
Corbeille & Treillage flourish all the year :  
The frosts strike harmless on your painted posts,  
And ev'n its cradled walks December boasts.

“ ‘Here thro' the gravel bursts the bubbling rill,  
And sloping turfs eternal dews distill ;  
Your firmer walks are level, straight, & dry,  
Nor one dead colour there fatigues the eye :  
Where all the rainbow's various hues are found,  
And Fleurs-de-Lys, in pebbles, paint the ground,  
Each step we tread the breast to glory warms,  
And every parterre is, a coat of arms !

“ ‘It shall be so, ye short-lived sweets, adieu !  
In vain you court the smell, in vain the view ;  
No more shall mats their sheltering aid supply,—  
Die, ye Azalias, ye Magnolias, die !  
Rave, or not rave, your shivering pride shall fall,  
And one promiscuous ruin whelm you all.

“ ‘Give me your wither’d roots, ye falling trees ;  
Give me your pebbles, ye surrounding seas ;  
Ye mineral damps, that to perfection rear  
Your spars & chrystals, pour your treasures here :  
Your spoils shall triumph o’er this wintry waste,  
’Till France shall envy Britain’s artful taste.’ ”

“ Poor Walter Clarke, who heard, behind a tree,  
This plaintive dirge, this sad soliloquy,  
Burst trembling forth, & with a heart-felt groan,  
Exclaim’d, ‘ My hopes, my darling hopes, are gone !  
O my good Lord, if this your fixt decree,  
Be kind, at least, to Martha Horne & me :  
Your faithful slaves, obsequious, & resign’d,  
Will change their labours, as you change your mind :  
Will still with duteous care their wages earn,  
And build you such a garden—in a barn ! ’ ”

MR. WHITEHEAD wrote the following lines to LORD NUNEHAM in consequence of LORD HARCOURT'S building a LAUNDRY close to the FLOWER-GARDEN, at Nuneham <sup>a</sup> :—

“ WE laundry-maids at Nuneham  
Are the happiest maids in the nation,  
With a rub, rub, rub, & a frothing tub,  
And a charming situation.

“ No more shall our caps & aprons  
Be torn by gooseberry-bushes,  
Or our ruffles be rent by the thistle, & bent,  
Or our sheets be soil'd with rushes.

“ Our lines shall grace laburnams,  
Since such our master's will is ;  
And our smaller things shall dangle on strings  
From tuberosé tops & lilies.

“ No more in our chests of linen  
Shall Lavender reign despotic,  
We'll cull our flowers from yonder bowers,  
And our smocks shall smell exotic.”

<sup>a</sup> Vide p. 296.

THE following lines were written by MR. WHITEHEAD on the DEATH of LAUNCELOT BROWN, Esq.—

“CLOS'D are his toils, the fatal shaft has flown,  
And in Earth's bosom sleeps self-tutor'd Brown,  
Whose eye, quick glancing, from the shapeless waste  
Could call forth form, & painted as it pass'd ;  
Could add fresh smiles to Nature's softest face,  
And tame her wildest beauties into grace.

“Beneath his plastic hand, his keener view,  
Albion, the world's fair garden, fairer grew ;  
On half the land he stamp'd his genuine fame,  
And Taste & Genius have inscrib'd his name.  
For what remains, tho' hill, & vale, & shade,  
And lawns & waters lend their copious aid,  
Wanting his master-touch to bid them know  
Their just gradations, & their happiest glow,  
The loveliest scenes must still unfinish'd stand,  
And owe their only charms to Nature's hand.”

TO GEORGIANA, COUNTESS SPENCER, ON LORD  
ALTHORP'S going to HARROW SCHOOL.

"THE dames of Greece & Rome, when Glory's charms  
Call'd their dear offspring from their fost'ring arms,  
The issuing boy with eager transport drest,  
Bound the rich corselet on his panting breast,  
Taught the light plume with grace to wave on high,  
And girt the sword on the young warrior's thigh.

"And must a British fair be taught to gain  
An easier conquest o'er a transient pain?  
Why seems that clouded brow opprest with care?  
What means that sigh? He goes not to the war:  
He goes to gain, in wise Minerva's field,  
A mental helmet & a mental shield,  
To nerve each virtue, combat every fear,  
And bring thee back a joy for every tear.

"Oh think hereafter what thy breast will feel,  
When, nobly anxious for the publick weal,  
He leads—in Senates leads—the firm debate,  
Or guides, with strength matur'd, the reins of state.  
How wilt thou then, when Fame's immortal blast  
Swell on thy ear, forget the sorrows past,  
And, as each moment brings some added bliss,  
Exclaim with fondness—did I weep for this?"



## TO LADY NUNEHAM.

“CAN this be Nuneham’s liberal shade  
Where wreaths are twin’d & honours paid,  
And rustic carols sung;  
Profuse of praise to every guest,  
Whilst to the mistress of the feast  
No grateful lyre is strung?

“To her the animating soul,  
The moving spirit of the whole,  
Warm’d by whose quick’ning charms  
Each cottage breast to glory wakes,  
Each industry new vigour takes,  
And sloth unfolds her arms.

“She deigns the orphan’s cry to hear,  
She wipes from want the falling tear,  
With pity’s healing dews,  
She bathes the rugged couch of pain,  
And yet no muse has breathed a strain  
To her <sup>b</sup>, *herself a muse*.

“She wants it not, for humbler themes  
Reserve your vain poetic dreams,  
Ye brethren of the bays.  
That heart, from whence such bounty flow’d,  
That heart, which feels for others’ good,  
That heart itself repays.”

<sup>b</sup> “Adriel the Muse’s friend, himself a Muse.”—*Dryden*.







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